A

MEMOIR

OF

CENTRAL INDIA,

INCLUDING

MALWA,

AND ADJOINING PROVINCES.

WITH

THE HISTORY,

AND COPIOUS ILLUSTRATIONS,

OF THE

PAST AND PRESENT CONDITION OF THAT COUNTRY.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR JOHN MALCOLM, G.C.B. K.L.S.

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TWO VOLUMES.

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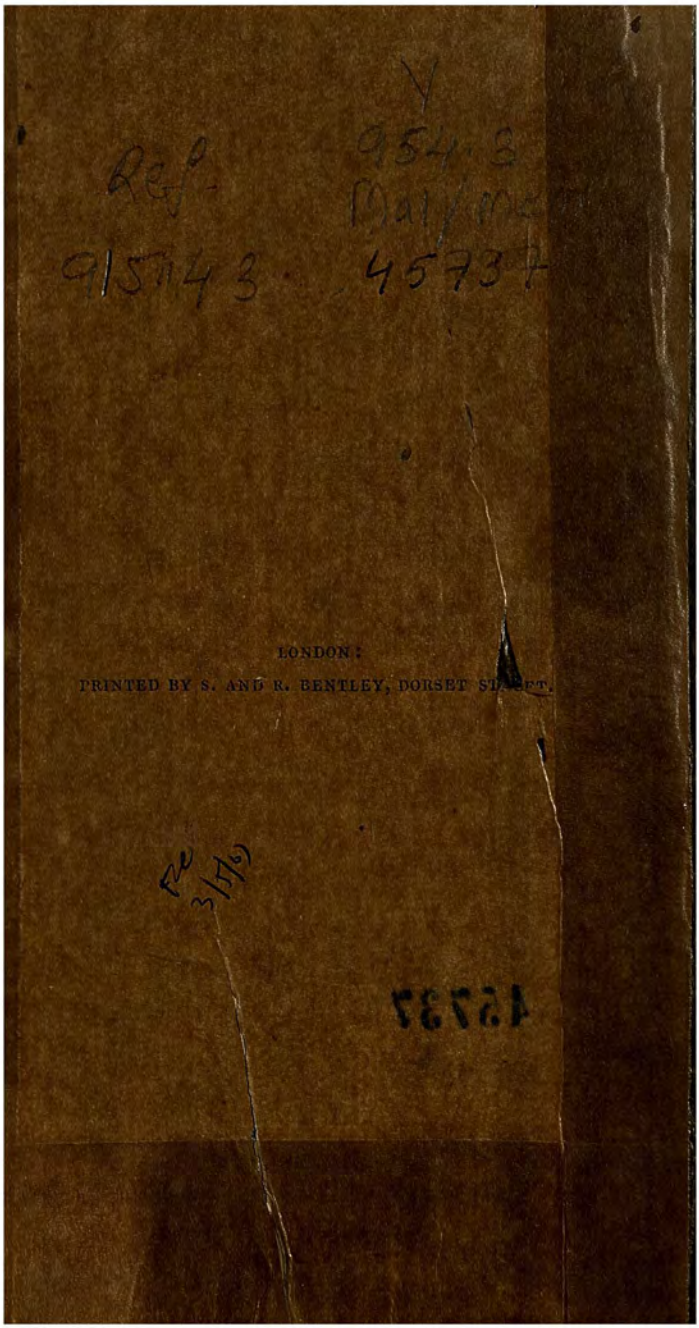
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PREFACE.

THE name of Central India, though new, and still indefinite as to the exact limits of the territories it comprehends, has been adopted in this work because it is the appellation by which Malwa and the contiguous provinces are designated in the official records of the Supreme Government. This region was hardly to be traced in the best maps, and we knew little of its inhabitants beyond the reports of that continued warfare and anarchy to which they had been exposed for the last thirty years, when the outrages committed by the hordes of plunderers to whom it had become a home, compelled us to enter it with our armies in order that we might subdue them.

In January 1818 the Author was placed by the Marquis of Hastings in the military and political charge of Central India; and during the years he filled that station, his own attention, and that of the able public officers under

his authority, was directed to the object of collecting materials for the illustration of its past and present condition. These he formed into a report, which was transmitted to Calcutta, where it was printed by order of Government. Several copies were sent to England, from which copious extracts found their way into periodical publications. This report having been drawn up amid the hurry of other duties, and when the Author was in a bad state of health, had many imperfections that required to be corrected: he therefore solicited permission from the Honourable Court of Directors to make it the groundwork of this memoir, which in consequence contains the substance of that official document.

Notwithstanding this advantage, the Author has found his task much more difficult than he had anticipated; and he almost despairs of attracting general readers to a work, which, although it contains much new and interesting matter, is necessarily filled with names harsh and unpleasant to an Englishman's ear, and fatiguing to his
He has, however, endeavoured to obviat
rious objection, by throwing many of the
able minute details into the notes, and tra

others to a very full Appendix and comprehensive Index. But, after all, these volumes must derive their chief merit from the collection of facts illustrative of the genuine history and character of the Natives of India, and from the fiscal and statistical information they contain.

Though the previous studies and occupations of the Author had prepared him for the task he undertook; still there was such a blank to fill up; so little was known, and so much knowledge was indispensable before he could venture to transmit a report that was to be the foundation of public measures, that he would almost have shrunk from the undertaking, had he not been assisted in his researches by many public officers distinguished for their zeal, activity, and talents. Their designations, the duties they performed, the nature of the communications they contributed, together with the other sources of information, are stated in the Appendix*. A perusal of this list will greatly enhance the value of the facts, and shew that they possess every requisite to establish their authenticity.

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* Appendix, No. I.

So favourable an opportunity has seldom occurred of observing the character of all ranks of the Natives of India, as that which the Author enjoyed. The situation in which he was placed enabled him to obtain the most minute information at a period when peculiar circumstances tended to bring every virtue and vice that belonged to individuals or communities into prominent action; and if he has succeeded in conveying this knowledge to the European reader, his object is attained. Throughout this work the Author has purposely abstained from making comparisons between the habits, privileges, and condition of the inhabitants of Central India, and those of other parts of that vast continent. Such opportunities presented themselves at every page, but even a superficial notice of them would have swelled these volumes to an inconvenient bulk;—besides this, it was thought, for many reasons, expedient to reject them, and to leave to others the task of comparing the facts stated, with information derived from other sources. It appeared, however, incumbent on the Author to offer some general reflections on the fabric of the British power in the East; how far it has been

affected by late conquests; and also to state his opinions regarding the species of administration best adapted to Central India and countries similarly situated. To this object he has devoted the concluding chapter, which contains the result of all his experience; nor has he there recommended any measure which he does not, from sincere conviction, believe to be both practicable and indispensable. To explain this still farther, he may add, that there is not a sentiment therein expressed, which has not in substance, and nearly in words, been previously submitted, in a public or private form, to his official superiors, or to those whose duty it was to communicate with them; and he believes, that although differences of opinion may exist, chiefly as to the mode of introducing such arrangements, his suggestions are not essentially at variance with the sentiments entertained by the eminent persons to whom his letters were addressed.

The Author need hardly state in this Preface, what a knowledge of the station he filled implies, that, in the prosecution of all his measures, he acted merely as the executive officer of the Supreme Government. The peculiar circumstances

of the countries committed to his charge required that he should have great latitude of action, and this was granted to him with scarcely any restriction. Indeed, to this unlimited confidence, and to the personal as well as public support of the Marquis of Hastings, and the liberal and just principles of that nobleman's administration, he must ascribe that success with which his labours were attended.

The Appendix will be found to contain some valuable papers.—A short memoir of the map, written by Lieutenant Gibbings, assistant-quarter-master-general, who constructed it, should have been included, but this useful document has unfortunately been lost; it becomes necessary, therefore, to state, that its contents shewed that the accompanying map of Central India was entirely composed from original and authentic materials. These consisted of measured routes and military surveys, corrected by the tables of latitudes and longitudes furnished by Captain Dangerfield, whose scientific papers, alike illustrative of the Geology and Geography of the countries he visited, will be noticed hereafter.

For his kind aid in correcting the press, and for his opinions and observations on different parts of this work, the Author is under great obligations to Mr. W. Hamilton, a gentleman well known to the public by his Indian Gazetteer, and Description of Hindustan, works which have diffused a general knowledge of our Eastern possessions beyond any that have been published.

Mr. W. Hamilton has also digested a Geographical Index of the Provinces, Cities, and Towns mentioned in the course of the Memoir. This useful compendium has, for more easy reference, been kept distinct from the General Index, and forms the concluding number of the Appendix.*

* No. XIX.

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CONTENTS

OF

THE FIRST VOLUME.

CHAPTER I.

Observations on the Geography, Soil, Climate, ...
Productions of Central India .....

CHAPTER II

History of Malwa .....

CHAPTER III.

Mahratta Invasion of Malwa .....

CHAPTER IV.

The Families of the Poars of Dhar and Dewass .....

CHAPTER V.

Family of Sindia.....

CHAPTER VI.

Family of Holkar .....

CHAPTER VII.

Events at the Court of Holkar .....

CHAPTER VIII.

Ameer Khan .....

CHAPTER I

Observations on the Geography, Soil, Climate, and Productions of Central India.

The prefixed Map of the country now termed [illegible] India, comprises territory from twenty-one [illegible]-five degrees North latitude, and from [illegible] three to eighty East longitude; or fro[illegible] in Mewar North to the Taptee [illegible] and from Bundelcund East to [illegible] West. It includes all those province[illegible] belonged to the Soubah*, or G[illegible]

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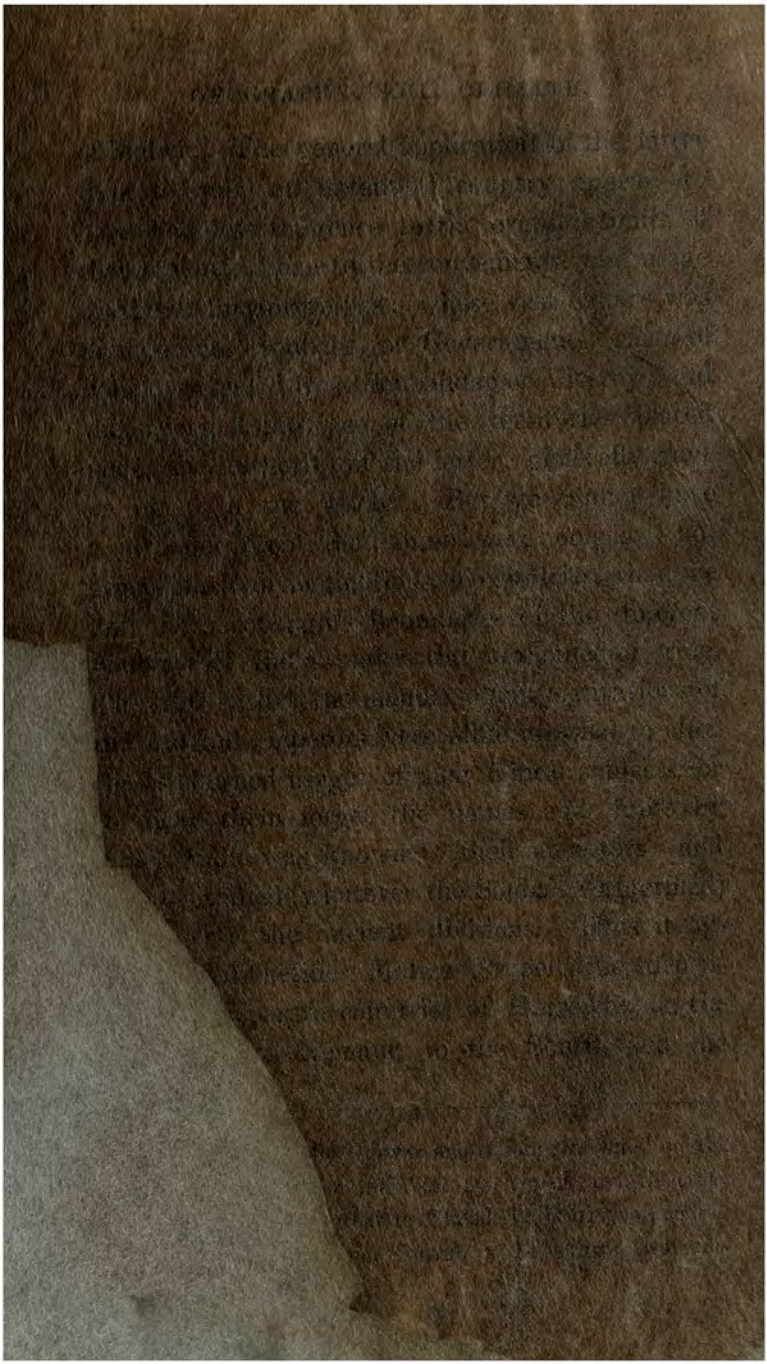
* According to Abul Fazel, the autho[illegible] whose authority most Eu[illegible] [illegible]ed, the Soubah of Malwa lies [illegible] twenty-fifth degrees of No[illegible] [illegible] and seventy-eighth of E[illegible]



mango is now produced, said to have been originally introduced from Goa by the Mahrattas, which is, in size and flavour, in a degree inferior to those of its parent stock. But gardens have for the last thirty years received little attention in this province; and the generality of its fruits are not remarkable for their quality, nor in great abundance.

There are in Malwa and the adjoining provinces many forests, several of which abound in fine timber, particularly the teak; but these will be noticed hereafter, as forming a valuable article of commerce.

The animals, wild and tame, are the same as in other parts of India. Amongst the wilder classes inhabiting the hilly and woody tracts, we may enumerate the tiger, leopard, bear, wolf, hyæna, wild hog, antelope, neelgahee or white-footed antelope, sambre, and other deer species. The skin of the sambre, when well prepared, forms an excellent material for the military accoutrements of the soldiers of the Native Powers, and is exported to the neighbouring countries. Amongst domestic animals, the horned cattle are much esteemed, and constitute a large article of export. Sheep and goats are neither numerous, nor held in any estimation; but the neighbouring provinces of Ajmeer and Mewar produce them in great numbers, and of a good kind.

Though horses are reared in Malwa, it has

never obtained a high reputation for the breed of that animal, arising in some measure from the proximity of the celebrated breeding province of Kattywar, and the preference given by the Mahomedans to the Northern horse, and by the Mahrattas to the fine race which they brought with them from the Deckan.

Camels are seldom reared in Malwa, nor does the climate seem favourable to that animal; they are mostly brought from the dry, sandy, and warmer plains of Marwar, where they are reared in great numbers, and of superior size and strength.

Fish, of good size and flavour, abound in most of the rivers of Malwa: but as neither these, nor the small animals of chase and birds of prey and game, differ from those known in other parts of India, a distinct enumeration of them is unnecessary.

Some of the cities and towns * of Malwa have

* The principal cities and towns of Malwa are included in the following list: Oojein, Indore, Dhar, Rutlam, Nolye or Burnuggur, Katchrode, Goned, Mundissor, Jawud, Rampoorah, Bampoorah, Manassah, Anggur, Seronge, Bhilsah, Shujahalpoor, Ashta, Shahjehanpoor, Dewass, Dug, Gungraur, Tal, Mundawul, Mahidpoor, Sarungpoor, Bhopal, Dohud, and Mandoo. Of these the most ancient is Oojein, which ranks high among the sacred cities noticed in the Puranas of the Hindus, and is mentioned by Greek historians; but the modern Oojein stands two miles South of the former city, which is said to have been buried under a shower of earth, but which appears to me to have

range of the thermometer is exceedingly small, seldom falling lower than 72° night and morning, or rising higher than 76° or 77° at noon. Though the mornings become cooler soon after the close of the rainy season, there is no very cold weather till the month of December: it continues all January, and part of February. In the latter month, in 1820, the thermometer stood, at 6 o'clock in the morning, at 28°. During the hot season which succeeds, the parching winds from the Northward and Westward, that prevail in most parts of India to an intense degree, are here comparatively mild and of short duration. The thermometer, however, during the day rises sometimes as high as 98°; but the nights are invariably cool and refreshing in Malwa.

As consisting of a flat and basaltic formation,* no variety of metallic minerals can be looked for in Malwa. Iron ore of good quality is plentiful; and in the boundary hills and primary mountains of Mewar and Marwar, which extend to the North-west between this province, Guzerat, and

* No. II. and No. III. of the Appendix are part of a Report from Captain Dangerfield, comprising his meteorological, geographical, and astronomical observations of the countries he visited. That scientific officer has also added his remarks on the geology of Central India, which he has illustrated by a sketch annexed to No. II. The meteorological register kept by Captain Dangerfield forms No. III.

Ajmeer, copper and lead mines are stated to have been formerly worked to some extent, and with considerable profit; but during the late troubled times, this work was stopped, and it has not yet been resumed.

The soil of Malwa, though generally of little depth, is celebrated for its fertility. It mostly consists of either a loose rich black loam, or a more compact ferrugineous mould; add to this the facility of artificial irrigation, and few parts of India will be found to possess more natural advantages, or to produce a greater variety of grain.*

Fruits were formerly in great abundance and perfection, and Abul Fazel mentions the luxuriance which the vine attained in Malwa. A

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* Of the vegetable productions of Malwa, the poppy for the extraction of opium is the principal, and constitutes a great portion of the export trade of that province. Of this drug upwards of ten thousand maunds, or about 350,000 pounds of avoirdupois weight, are annually produced, of which quantity six thousand maunds may be reckoned surplus for exportation. Amongst the grain we may chiefly enumerate wheat, gram, peas, jowarry, bajrie, moong, oorud, Indian corn, and toowur: of the two first the largest amount is exported. Rice is grown in small quantities for internal use, but there is cultivated more than sufficient for home consumption, of sugar-cane, tobacco, cotton, linseed, teel or sweet-oil plant, garlick, turmeric, and ginger. Indigo is also raised in small quantities; and the morindo citrifolia is, on account of its root, which affords an excellent red dye, and is a considerable article of commerce, reared to a great extent.

been much celebrated both in ancient and modern history. Of some of these it is now difficult to trace the sites, or discover the names; but many

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been overwhelmed by the Sepra river, and the new city, which stands nearly as high, has been often threatened with a similar fate.

Next in rank to Oojein, we may perhaps place Dhar, or Dharanugguree, as still called by the Hindus: it is probably the ancient Dharanuggur, but its importance in the authentic history of Malwa is chiefly derived from its becoming, on the transfer of the Government from Oojein, the seat of the princes of that province previously to their final establishment at Mandoo. This last city, though containing noble and interesting remains, has long since been entirely desolate: it will be hereafter noticed.

Indore, as a city, is of modern date. That part of the Holkar capital called Old Indore, was a small village, the site of which pleased Alia Baee, who encamped at it after the death of Mulhar Row Holkar. She ordered the head officer of the district to remove to it from Kumpal; and, having built a new city on the opposite or Western bank of the small clear stream which flowed past it, gave it the same name of Indore. Her partiality for this spot soon raised it to a state of comparative prosperity, though she continued through life to reside at the city of Mheysir.

The origin of Bhilsah and Mundissor is involved in that fable which is common to all early Hindu history. The former is said to have been built by the Hindu demigod Ramchunder, and the latter by his son Dusrut, who gave his name to the city, which it retained till modern times, when it was corrupted by the Western Rajpoots to Dussore, and is now generally called Mundissor.

Shujahalpoor and Shahjehanpoor derive their names from

deserve the notice of the antiquary, from the remains of architecture, sculpture, and inscriptions to be found amid their ruins.

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their founders. The former was built by Shujah Khan, one of the most distinguished governors of Malwa, and the latter by the Emperor Shah Jehan.

Serouge, corrupted from Sheer Gunge, derives its name and origin from its site, becoming the Gunge, or cantonments, of the Emperor Sheer Shah.

Rutlam was greatly increased, and, according to some accounts, entirely founded during the reign of Shah Jehan by Ruttun Singh, a Rhattore Rajpoot, on whom the district of which it is now the capital, was bestowed as a reward for military services.

Nolye was built by Raja Nol, or Nowul. Its modern appellation of Burnuggur has its origin in a strange vulgar superstition of names of bad omen, which must not be pronounced before the morning meal. The city is called either Nolye or Burnuggur, according to the hour in which its mention becomes necessary.

Sarungpoor is an ancient city, and the head of a Sircar, or large division of the country. It was greatly improved by Baz Bahadur, the last Mussulman prince of Malwa who assumed the title of King.

Bhopal, we are told, derived its name from its Rajpoot founder, the minister of the celebrated Hindu Raja Bhoj, and was built at the same time that his master formed the present district of Tal into a lake, and founded near it the city of Bhojpoor, now in ruins.

Among the ruins which merit the attention of the antiquary, we may mention those of the ancient town of Coone, in Nemaur, and the Caves of Baug in Rath, and those of Dumnar, near the Chumbul.

The small Province of NEMAUR is that part of the Valley of the Nerbudda which lies between Hindia East and Kotra West, and between the Vindhya range North and the Satpoorah South. Its length is about one hundred and thirty miles, and its general breadth from thirty to forty; but in the centre it may be reckoned above seventy. On the North bank of the Nerbudda, the boundary mountains seldom recede more than eighteen miles from its banks; and at the Hurn Pahl*, or Deer's Leap, on the Western extremity of the province, the two ranges are merely divided by the river. The greater part of Nemaur is a fertile undulating plain, once perfectly open, flourishing, and highly cultivated, but of late years overgrown in many parts with low jungle, or brushwood. The Western portion on both sides the river, including Burwance, Chiculdah, Durrempoorce, Sultanabad, and as far as Kurgond, is generally level and cultivated: but the Eastern portion, from the West of the sacred Island of Mundatta† to

* The name of the Hurn Pahl is derived from the circumstance of the river being here obstructed by large masses of basalt, rising about ten or eleven feet above the ordinary level of the stream, and giving passage to the river through three very narrow channels, across each of which, it is supposed, an antelope could bound.

† This island, which is about thirty-eight miles above Mheysir, is the religious resort of Hindoo pilgrims from all

Kaukote, is, on the Northern bank* of the Nerbudda, one mass or cluster of low hills covered with thick jungle, and almost entirely desolate, excepting on the immediate borders of the river, where some predatory Rajpoot chiefs found fastnesses secure from pursuit, whence, till the establishment of the English power, they plundered the neighbouring districts from Asseer to the gates of Indore. On the Southern bank, for three or four miles from the river, the country has the same features as to the North; but beyond that, it resembles other parts of the province, excepting that from the desertion or destruction of its population, less cultivation exists, and low jungle has in most parts taken its place.

The soil of Nemaur is not dissimilar to that of Malwa, and its pasturage is reckoned peculiarly fine. Besides the Nerbudda, which traverses its whole length, it is well watered by the several tributary streams of that river.

The greatest part of the lands on the Northern bank of the Nerbudda belong to the Governments

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quarters, as containing the shrine of Onkar, one of the incarnations of Mahadeo, and being considered one of his twelve places of residence on this earth.

* The North of the Nerbudda from Kaukote to Nemawur opposite Hindia, is deemed by the natives part of Gondwarrah; and the inhabitants speak the Gondee dialect.

of Dhar and Holkar, excepting the small district of Bancaneer, which is the property of Sindia, and some of the hilly parts of the province, which Rajpoot and Bheel chiefs continue to possess.

Mheysir must be considered the principal and almost only place of note in Nemaur. This ancient city, which is pleasantly situated on the Northern bank of the Nerbudda, with a fort elevated above the town, has long been, as well as its attached lands, accounted a distinct portion of territory, probably from having been under the immediate management of the head of the Holkar family, when it was their capital. That benefit which it formerly derived from being the residence of Alia Baee, is now given to it as containing the ashes of that great and venerated woman. Public buildings of different kinds are erecting, and a most spacious and highly finished flight of stone steps from the town to the river, meant, with adjoining temples, to be dedicated to her memory, is nearly completed.

With the exception of the small district of Burwanee, the greatest part of Southern Nemaur consists of the ancient Sircar, or Government, of Beejaghur, the name of which is now only preserved in the ruins of the capital, situated within the limits of a large hill-fort in the Satpoorah range. This sircar, like others, underwent, during the Mahomedan sway, different modifications. One writer mentions that, in the eighth year of the

reign of Shah Jehan, the Sircar of Beejaghur, part of the Hindia district, and some others in the space between the Nerbudda and the Taptee, were directed to be incorporated into the Soubah of Candeish; and Abul Fazel calls Beejaghur the capital of Candeish, and states it to have been for a long time the residence of its viceroy. These arbitrary changes confirm what has been said regarding the usage of the Delhi Government. Hindu tradition, corroborated by names of districts and by difference of language (a very strong testimony), places as the Southern boundary of Nemaur the Satpoorah range; according to them, the hill fort of Asseer* is the boundary of the two provinces, and by some it is said to be half in Nemaur, and half in Candeish.

From the Vindhya range on the Western extremity of Nemaur, there extends North a hilly tract separating Malwa from Guzerat, whose general breadth is from fifty to seventy miles, and which is terminated by the Southern and Western boundaries of Mewar. The Southern portion of this tract, which lies between Tandlah and the Nerbudda, constitutes what the Hindus term

* This strong fortress, according to popular tradition, derives its name from its founder Assa, a rich and celebrated Hindu, Zemindar, or landholder, of the Aheer tribe, and by corruption Assa Aheer has been converted to Asseer.

RATH, and contains the several petty states of Jabooah, Ally, Babra, Jobut, and the lands of their several dependent chiefs, the great proportion of whose subjects are Bheels. Though a considerable portion of this district consists of rocky hills, and thick forests, yet many fertile and well-watered valleys lie amidst the successive ranges of its hills, which pursue almost invariably a Northerly direction, nearly parallel and equidistant. This country forms an intermediate step, elevated above Guzerat, and rising towards Malwa; but it is neither in climate, nor production, equal to the latter.

Rath has, with the exception of the capitals of the petty states, few large towns or villages. Amongst the former, Jabooah principally merits notice, from its romantic situation in a small rich valley, near the base of a low range of hills.

The hills of Rath abound in iron ore; and the forests afford, besides the teak and bamboos, many timber-trees, adapted not only to building, but to many other useful and ornamental purposes. There are several well-frequented roads through this province, connecting Malwa with Guzerat.

The province of BAGUR is a continuation of the same hilly tract as Rath, from which it is divided by merely a narrow slip of Malwa, which projects into it from Paitlawud to Dohud. It is

bounded on the North by Kantul and Mewar, and East and West by Malwa and Guzerat. The country in no point differs from that of Rath but in the lesser number of its streams, fewer valleys, and less cultivation, excepting on its Northern extremity, where the soil is good and fruitful. The principal part of the inhabitants of Bagur are Bheels and Meenas of the cultivating classes, under the authority of Rajpoot chiefs and Thakoors, or Barons. The greater part of this province belongs to the petty Princes of Banswara and Dongurpoor, whose capitals, with Saugwara, are the only places of any note in the country. Many ruined towns, villages, temples, and interesting Hindu antiquities, are scattered over its Northern portion, indicative of a former state of prosperity and cultivation. The roads through it leading by Dongurpoor and Lunawara into Guzerat, are good, and much travelled upon. From its extensive and thick forests, fevers of a malignant nature are prevalent during the two months immediately succeeding the rainy season; nor can the climate at any period of the year be deemed pleasant or salubrious.

KANTUL is a small district rather than a province, lying between Bagur and Mewar, and extending Westward from Mundissor to the Banswara and Odeypoor territories. Its length is about forty miles, and breadth from twenty to twenty-five

miles. It comprises the principal part of the territories of the Raja of Pertaubghur. His capital is a large fortified town, but his chief residence has always been at Dewla, twelve miles West of it. The greater part of the country is level, open, and well cultivated. It is much higher than Bagur, being nearly of the same elevation as that part of Malwa* which it adjoins. Roads to Guzerat, Kattywar, and Cutch, lead through this province. The soil of Kantul is good, and produces opium and other crops similar to those of Malwa. It is well watered by small tributary streams of the Mhye: that river passes near its Southern boundary.

The province of HARROWTEE lies on the North-east extremity of Malwa, and is separated from it by the Mokundra hills, and the continuation of the Chittore range. It possesses the general features and the same natural advantages as Malwa, with the exception of its climate, which, from its more elevated hilly girdle, is much warmer, and less salubrious. Its elevation differs little from that of the adjoining part of Malwa; and it is fertilized by some of the same rivers†, which in

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* Some intelligent Hindus whom I have spoken to, account part of Kantul in Malwa; but the name signifies border or boundary.

† Kah Sind, Chumbul, Aher, &c.

their passage through this district become considerable streams. The principal towns are Kotah, Pattun, and Boondee, the first and last of which are the capitals of the Rajpoot princes who divide this province. Pattun, or, as it is commonly called, Jalrapattun, founded by the Raj Rana Zalim Singh of Kotah, has within twenty years risen from a village to be one of the most beautiful and opulent cities in Malwa.

The hilly belt which forms the Eastern boundary of the level plains of Malwa, and which appears to divide that province from Bundelcund in the same way as Rath and Bagur separate it from Guzerat, contains the small provinces of Chanderry, Keechewarra, and Aheerwara. This limit to the Eastward does not correspond with that assigned by Abul Fazel, who computes the length of the soubah from Gurrah to Bauswara at two hundred and forty-five coss*: a distance which compels us to conclude, that, of three Gurrahs in this quarter, that termed Gurrah Mundela, or Gurrah Jubbulpoor, is the one alluded to. The circumstance of this last district, which, like Bhaumaur, lies along the Nerbudda below the Vindhya range, having several countries between it and the

* The Coss is, in general, estimated at forty-two to the degree, but its length differs in almost every province of India. It may be computed as never under a mile and a half, and never (except in that introduced by the mandate of the late Tippoo Sultan in Mysore) more than two miles.

plains of Malwa little connected with the latter, and whose inhabitants speak a different dialect, is no reason why these lands should not have been included in the soubah of that name, as constituted under the Delhi government. But there appears every reason to believe, that Malwa was originally bounded by the hilly tract already noticed, which, touching Narwar on the North, connects it with Harrowtee and the Chittore range, and joins on the South-east the Vindhya mountains, which, throughout, form the most marked of all the natural boundaries of the province.

CHAPTER II.

History of Malwa.

THE history of Malwa is involved in darkness and fable. Oojein, which may still, from its superior magnitude, be deemed the capital of this province, has perhaps more undoubted claims to remote antiquity than any inhabited city in India; it being not only mentioned in the sacred volumes of the Hindus, but in the Periplus of the Erythrean sea, and by Ptolemy. We find, in Indian manuscripts, Malwa noticed as a separate province eight hundred and fifty years before the Christian æra, when Dunjee, to whom a divine origin * is given, restored the power of the Brahmins, which, it is stated, had been destroyed by the Buddhists, many remains of whose religion are still to be found in this part of India. In the excavation of a mountain near Baug, we trace, both in the form of the temples, and in that of the figures and

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* This tale is supposed by some to refer to his being one of the Soorujbuns, or Solar race; but most accounts deem Dunjee a Bheel, and there can be no doubt that degraded race enjoyed power in this part of the country at a very remote period.

symbols which they contain, the peculiar characteristics of the Buddhist* worship.

According to Hindu records, the family of Dunjee had reigned three hundred and eighty-seven years, when Putraj, the fifth in descent, dying without issue, Adut Puar (a Rajpoot† prince) ascended the throne, establishing the Puar‡ dynasty, which continued upwards of one thousand and fifty-eight years to rule over Malwa.

During the period that Dunjee's family held Malwa, we find no particular mention of them until about seven hundred and thirty years before Christ, when Dunjee's successor is said to have shaken off his dependence on the sovereign of Delhi. We lose even these indistinct traces of Malwa after the above period, till near our own

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* The principal Buddha is not so old as eight centuries before Christ; his age has been accurately ascertained, by coincident astronomical calculations, to be about five centuries and a half before Christ (vide Asiatic Researches). There are, however, strong reasons for conjecturing, that there were several Buddhas, often confounded with each other: the first, about one thousand years before Christ, the second about five hundred and fifty years before Christ, and a third about two hundred and fifty years after Christ.

† Rajpoot, literally son of a Raja or prince, is the generic name for one of the first and most numerous classes, who are called Khetri, or the military, and form the second of the four castes into which the Hindus are divided.

‡ Puar is the distinguishing name of a Rajpoot family, or clan, still numerous in Malwa.

æra, when Vicramaditya, a prince whom all Hindu authors agree in describing as the encourager of learning and the arts*, obtained sovereignty. According to the Hindu authorities, Vicramaditya had no estate assigned him by his father, and lived for a considerable time with his illegitimate brother Burtree at Oojein, the capital of the kingdom of Malwa, of which Burtree was governor. A quarrel, however, arising between the brothers, Vicramaditya left Oojein, and travelled for a considerable period in great poverty over Guzerat and other parts of India. On his return to Malwa, he found that his brother, disgusted at the infidelity of his wife, had resigned all worldly concerns, and become a religious mendicant. He therefore assumed charge of the province, and from that period commenced a career which led to the establishment of his power over the greatest part of India. He is said to have restored the Hindu monarchy to that splendour which it had lost in consequence of a succession of weak monarchs, whose characters had encouraged the governors of distant provinces to rebel, and to form the territories committed to

* We owe to Vicramaditya, or, as he is more commonly called, Vicramajeet, the æra known by his name, and which is at this day in general use over a great part of India. It is computed, like the Christian æra, by the solar year, and commences fifty-six years before Christ. Vide Asiatic Researches, vol. i. p. 144.

their charge into independent states. But this account of Vicramaditya has as yet been supported by no substantial proof, though we must conclude, from his great name and reputation over all India, that his power was very extended.

Of the successors of Vicramaditya, nothing occurs worthy of notice till the eleventh in descent, the celebrated Raja Bhoj*, whose name stands high in Hindu traditions. This prince changed

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* The history of Bhoj is, like that of Vicramaditya, blended with fable. He is stated to have vowed, in expiation of the sacrifice made by his mother, of her own life, to give him birth, to erect mounds to arrest the streams of nine rivers and ninety-nine rivulets. He discovered a district in his territories singularly calculated to facilitate the performance of this vow, and by building a great mound between two hills, which arrested the current of nine rivers and ninety-eight lesser streams, he formed the whole into a great lake. The mound said to have been made by him, was subsequently destroyed, and the streams (among which is the Betwa) allowed to pursue their courses. The space of country which was covered with water is asserted to be the modern district of Tal, or the Lake; and it is one of the most fruitful and populous in the principality of Bhopal. Bhojpoor, once a great city, and situated near the ruins of the mound, is at this moment only a large village; but it still bears its former name, and the ruins of many buildings and temples attest its antiquity. The remaining (ninety-ninth) stream was, according to the above legend, dammed by the minister of Raja Bhoj, whose name, Bhopal, was given to a village built near the dam that forms the lake, on the bank of which the present city of Bhopal is situated.

the seat of government from Oojein to Dhar, where it continued till transferred to Mandoo by the Mahomedan conquerors of Malwa.

On the death of Jye Chund, who succeeded Raja Bhoj, none of the Puars being deemed worthy of the crown, it was placed on the head of Jeetpaul, a Rajpoot chief*, who established the Towur dynasty†, which lasted one hundred and forty-two years. It was succeeded by that of the Chouhans‡, which began in the person of Jugdeo, and lasted one hundred and sixty-seven years. The fourth of this dynasty, Raja Basdeo, assumed imperial titles, and, we are informed, carried the arts to great perfection, and in every respect increased the fame and prosperity of his country.

During the reign of Maldeo, the last of this dynasty (and we may almost say of the Hindu

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* This chief is termed in the manuscript from which I write, a Zemindar, or landholder, according to the literal translation of the word; but this term has been very generally used by Mahomedan writers to designate the officer who presides over the Revenue Collectors of a province, whose situation is, from Hindu usage, hereditary, and who, being of the class of Zemindars, or landholders, is, by distinction, called "the Landholder, or Zemindar, of his Native province."

† This dynasty was called Towur from the name of the family, or rather clan of Rajpoots, to which they belonged.

‡ The Chouhan Rajpoots are to this day one of the highest and most powerful of the military tribes of Malwa.

princes of Malwa), part of the province was seized by Anundeo, a chief of the tribe of Vaisya*. But on the death of the former, not only Malwa, but a great part of the Delhi empire, fell under the Mahomedan dominion.

In the conclusion of this short view of the first princes of Malwa, it is to be remarked, that all accounts, written or traditionary, combine to prove that it was a dependency of the Hindu empire of Delhi; though, like other divisions of the empire, its princes frequently assumed sovereign power, and maintained it through several generations.

It would be alike useless and tedious to trace minutely the history of Malwa for a long period after the first Mahomedan conquest, which exhibits nothing but a series of troubles, in which this province almost lost its rank as a distinct division of ancient India.† Its boundaries, subsequently to this date, varied with the success of its several usurpers. One fact, however, appears clear, that the country was only partially subdued. We find Hindu princes and chiefs, in

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* The tribe of Vaisya is the third of the four castes of the Hindus, and their allotted occupation is trade; but this is one of many instances of individuals stepping out of their prescribed limits.

† Malwa, we are told by Ferishta, was one of the fifty kingdoms into which India was divided at the earliest period of Hindu government.

almost every district, opposing the progress of the invaders, and often with such success* as to establish dynasties of three or four generations, who ruled over a considerable part of the country. These revolutions continued to be frequent till the more complete conquest of Bahadur Shah, which took place during the reign of Shah Udeen of Delhi, who put that leader to death, and appointed to the government of Malwa, Dilawur Khan Ghoree; who, taking advantage of the flight of Mahomed Toghluck, and the confusion into which India was thrown by the invasion of Timur, assumed the titles and ensigns of royalty. He fixed his capital at the city of Dhar, which still presents, in the ruins with which it is surrounded, the history of this change. The materials of its finest temples appear to have been appropriated to build palaces and mosques† for its new sovereign. This city did not, however, long remain the capital of the Mahomedans. Alif Khan (the son of Dilawur Khan), who became celebrated under the

A. D. 1387.

* Kummur Udeen, the second in descent from Shaikh Shah Ghizni, who first invaded the province, was slain by Cheetpal, a chief of the race of Maldeo.

† I took, when last at Dhar, a fine polished stone tablet of large dimensions, on which there was a Hindu inscription, from a ruined mosque, where this sacred writing had been placed as the floor of the Mumbur, or pulpit, of the Mahomedan place of worship.

name of Hoshung Shah, removed the seat of government to Mandoo*. A.D. 1404.

Mandoo lies nearly South-east, and at a distance of fifteen miles from Dhar, and had been irregularly fortified, according to the Hindu accounts, by a prince of the name of Jye Singh Deo†, but we never find it mentioned as a capital, and, though it was before inhabited, we may refer its origin, as a place of any importance, to Hoshung Shah, on whose death it became the seat of government of his family.

The site of Mandoo was very inviting. The space chosen by Hoshung Shah for his future capital is thirty-seven miles in circumference. It extends along the crest of the Vindhya‡ range

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* Ferishta.

† This prince, according to Hindu fable, was assisted in accomplishing his work by the possession of the Parus Puttur, or philosopher's stone, which was found during his reign by a grass-cutter. Its properties were discovered by a blacksmith, who carried it to Jye Singh Deo, who after using it to make gold enough to defray the expense of building Mandoo, is said to have given it to the priest of his family, who, displeased at receiving a stone, threw it, before its value was explained to him, into the Nerbudda. When sensible of what he had done, he sprang into the river in the vain hope of recovering it; but his efforts to reach the bottom were in vain. Credulous Hindus believe that at the place where this occurred, the Nerbudda became and continues to be unfathomable.

‡ The Vindhya range of mountains have been described in the preceding chapter. They may be termed, in every

[illegible] and is [illegible] from the table-land of Malwa, with which it is upon a level, by [illegible] of unequal depth, [illegible] two hundred feet, and [illegible] three to four hundred yards in [illegible] brink of this valley, (which, after [illegible] the city, descends in the form of wide [illegible] rugged ravines to the lower country, both to the East and West,) and on the summit of the ridge of the Vindhya mountains, which form the Southern face of Mandoo, a wall of considerable height was built, which, added to the natural strength of the ground, made it unassailable by any but regular attack; and this advantage, which gave security to property, combined with the salubrity of the air, abundance of water, and the rich nature of the ground that was encircled within the limits of the new capital, caused it early to attain a state of great prosperity.

Hoshung Shah, though his reign commenced in adversity*, afterwards acquired great fame. He engaged in hostilities with the princes South of the Nerbudda; and to facilitate operations against

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part where they touch this province, the South-western wall of Malwa. These mountains, which are called Vindian by the Greeks, are mentioned in the sacred volumes of the Hindus under the name here given. *Vide Sir Wm. Jones's Works, vol. i. p. 23.*

* He was made prisoner by the Prince of Guzerat, almost immediately after he ascended the throne.

the Hindu Prince of Gondwarra *, he built a town and fort on the left bank of the Nerbudda, to which he gave his own † name. This involved him in hostilities with the Mahomedan kings of the Bahmuman ‡ dynasty, which were attended with various fortune, but he was ultimately successful. He defeated and slew Nursingh, the ruler of Gondwarra, and took his rich capital of Kirlah, which with the adjoining country remained in his possession. Hoshung died immediately after this success, having reigned thirty years. His remains were brought from Hoshungabad to his new capital of Mandoo; and the noble mausoleum which was erected over them, is still in excellent preservation. A.D. 1433.

Hoshung Ghoree was succeeded by his son (Ghizni Khan §), a weak and dissolute sovereign. This prince was deturoned by his minister Ma- A.D. 1435.

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* Gondwarra means, literally, the country of the Gonds, a low tribe of Hindus, who at no remote period possessed almost the whole of that country to the South-east of the Nerbudda, which before the war of A.D. 1818 formed the extended dominions of the Mahratta Prince of Nagpoor.

† Hoshungabad, commonly, but improperly called Husingabad.

‡ This was one of those dynasties established in the Deckan. For a particular account of them, vide Scott's Deckan, vol. i.

§ In the Ayeen Akbery this prince is called Hussein Khan, and is said to have been imprisoned by his successor Mahomed Khiljee.

homed Khiljee, whose conduct, after he attained power, redeemed the crime of usurpation. It was to this prince that Mandoo owed its fame and splendour; and the magnificent tomb over Hoshung Shah, and the college and palaces that he built, give testimony of his respect for the memory of his benefactor, and of a regard and consideration for his subjects, that entitle him to that high reputation which he has attained among the Mahomedan princes of India. His reign, which lasted thirty-four years, appears, from Ferishta's account, to have been a scene of constant action. His life was passed in camp; but with the exception of the invasion of Malwa by Ahmed Shah, monarch of Guzerat, the operations of Mahomed Khiljee were beyond the limits of his own kingdom, the subjects of which enjoyed a prosperity and repose proportioned to the activity and energy of their warlike prince. Though living almost always in the field, his taste and magnificence adorned and enriched every part of his territories; and, besides the monuments of his splendour which have been already noticed, there are ruins of many palaces* built by him at Nalcha, a town bean-

* I fitted up one of these old palaces for a residence during the hot weather: it was not only necessary to clear away the bushes and briars with which its rooms were overgrown, but a tigress and two cubs were driven off by the workmen, from the den into which they had converted one of the subterranean chambers of this once proud palace of kings.

tifully situated six miles North of Mandoo, on the verge of the rich open country which here approaches those mountains and great ravines, by which the site of that capital has been described as bounded and defended.

Ferishta* dwells with delight on the character of this prince, who was, he observes, "polite, brave, just, and learned." Hindus and Mahomedans, he describes as alike happy under his reign; and it was his policy to unite them in the ties of concord and amity. His chief pleasure was to hear read the histories of former times, but particularly the biography of great and distinguished men. "The useful knowledge, however, of those "among whom he lived, was (the historian con-"cludes) that in which he had the most pride, "and in which he most excelled."

There can be little doubt from concurring testimonies, that it was under the government of Mahomed Khiljee, that Malwa reached its highest prosperity as a kingdom. But this prince, nevertheless, experienced during a life of constant action, some very serious reverses. He had at one time lost his throne, through a conspiracy of

* An account of the kings of Mandoo is to be found in several works. I believe that there is none more authentic than Ferishta, though other authors give a fuller detail of their actions, particularly the writer of the Maasur ul Omrah, or "The remains of the Nobles," a book of merited reputation.

his nobles, but was resected upon it by the aid of Sultan Muzuffer of Guzerat. On another occasion, he was taken prisoner by Khoombhoo Rauah of Chittore, who generously restored him to liberty and dominion. We find the cities of Chanderee, Islamabad, Hoshungabad, and Kirlah, described within the limits of his territories, which were bounded to the South by the Satpoorah range, extended West to the frontier of Guzerat, and East to Bundelcund. His authority was established to a Northerly direction, to Mewar and Harrowtee; and we read of this prince levying tribute on the Rajpoot princes of Chittore, Cumulnere, and others, by marching at different periods an army into their countries to make collections. But it appears from all the historians and records of that time, especially those of the Hindus, that some of the Rajpoot princes, particularly the Ranahs of Chittore, maintained a very arduous struggle with their Mahomedan neighbours, over whom they gained many and important victories.

The resources of Mehomed Khiljee may in some degree be estimated by his great expenditure on public edifices, and the large army he maintained. Ferishta states, that he invaded Guzerat with an army of one hundred thousand men. This is probably exaggerated; but, even admitting it, his disbursements appear so disproportioned to what the revenues of his actual territory could have supported, that we must conclude, that his

treasury was annually replenished by his foreign expeditions, and that, like many other warlike sovereigns, while he was considered by his own subjects as a just and powerful protector, he was viewed by the inhabitants of neighbouring countries as a plundering invader and oppressor.

Gheass Udeen Khiljee, the son and successor of Mahomed Khiljee, is represented as being (though brought up to share the toils and glory of his father) early satiated with power and dominion. He committed the cares of government to others, devoting himself to sensual pleasures. His palace at Mandoo is said to have contained five hundred beautiful women, whose numbers have been exaggerated by some writers to three times that amount. This prince reigned thirty-three years; and it is a remarkable proof of the energy and wisdom of his father's government, that a kingdom like Malwa, surrounded with turbulent neighbours, suffered no diminution of territory under his indolent and luxurious successor. A.D. 1468.

The life of Gheass Udeen was, according to some writers, terminated by his son Noorudeen. This fact is questioned, and treated as improbable by Ferishta. But the record which that historian gives of the reign of this prince, is not calculated to disprove the accusation. Though active and brave, he appears to have been the slave of his passions, and Hindus and Mahomedans were alike disgusted by the indecent scenes of his debauchery:

and his death (which happened after a reign of eleven years) was caused by using the cold bath, when in a fever from excessive drinking.

That Noorudeen, with all his vices, left the wealth and splendour of his kingdom unimpaired to his son Mahmood, is proved by one fact: according to respectable writers, seven hundred elephants in velvet housings walked at the coronation ceremony of the young prince through the streets of Mandoo.

The peace of the reign of Mahmood was disturbed by the intrigues of his brothers, one of
A.D. 1512. whom* seized upon Chanderee. To suppress these rebellions in his family, he had recourse to the aid of the Rajpoot or Hindu soldiers of his kingdom, and, according to Mahomedan authority, he delivered over the defence of his person and dominions to his minister Maderay Roy, who was of that tribe. But he soon became sensible of his error, and endeavoured to repair it by the discharge of a great part of his army. This, however, created first a mutiny, and afterwards hostilities between the Rajpoots and the Mahomedans, from the dangers of which Mahmood escaped, by flying to Guzerat, the reigning monarch† of which

* This chief, Baber observes in his Institutes, was encouraged and supported by Sultan Sekunder and Sultan Ibrahim at Delhi; and the latter, when Mahmood Shah died, displaced his son, and put one of his own officers in charge of Chanderee, which was taken from him by the Ranah of Chittore.

† Muzuffer Shah, King of Guzerat, is said to have desired

received him with open arms. An army marched to restore the royal fugitive, who succeeded, after a siege of several months, in taking Mandoo by storm. Nineteen thousand Rajpoots (including those who sacrificed themselves rather than survive defeat) are stated to have fallen on this memorable occasion. The monarch of Guzerat returned to his own territories, leaving three thousand of his cavalry to aid Mahmood in the wars he had to undertake against those Hindus, whom his unwise confidence had placed in possession of every strong hold in his kingdom.

There are good grounds to conclude that the above statement is not quite correct, and that Mahomedan authors have referred those misfortunes to treachery and family discord, which had their chief source in the valour and ability of Ranah Sunka, prince of Chittore, and at this period the acknowledged head of the Rajpoots. The Emperor Baber, in his Memoirs of his own time, mentions the victories of this celebrated Hindu prince over Shah Mahmood, and states that he took from him a number of provinces. Baber specifies among those, Rathghur, Sarungpoor, Bilsah, and Chanderee. The royal author, in a subsequent passage,

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to use Mahmood as an instrument of his ambition, but he was not the only Mahomedan prince who aided that monarch. The troops of the Prince of Candeish, and several other Mahomedan chiefs, joined to overthrow the supremacy the Hindus had established in Malwa.

relating his own conquests, mentions his having taken the latter city from the Rajpoot prince. "In the year of the Hejira 934, (he observes) "through the Divine favour, I took in a few hours "Chanderee by storm. It was commanded by "Mederay Roy, one of the highest and most dis- "tinguished of Ranah Sunka's officers. I slew all "the infidels, and from the city of hostility which "it had long been, I converted it into the city of "the Faith." The fact appears to be, that in the decline of the Khiljee dynasty, the Rajpoots made a strenuous effort to recover that sovereignty which they had lost over Malwa, and were alone prevented from accomplishing the object by the rising fortune of the new dynasty of the sovereigns of Delhi.

Mahmood Shah had made some progress in the reestablishment of his power, when he unfortunately gave protection to the fugitive brother of Bahadur Shah, King of Guzerat, and provoked, by this imprudence, the attack of that monarch, which terminated in his death and the destruction of his family. Mandoo was taken by Bahadur Shah; the unfortunate Mahmood was sent, with his wives and children, to be confined in the fortress of Powarghur; and on an attempt being made to release him, he was put to death at the town of Dohud, where he is interred.

From the occurrence of the above event to the conquest of Malwa by the emperors of Delhi (a

period of thirty-seven years) that province was a scene of successive revolutions. Bahadur Shah was expelled by Humayoon; but on the flight of the latter to Persia, Mulloo Khan, an officer of A. D. 1536.
the Khiljee government, succeeded in obliging the imperial officers to abandon a great part of the kingdom, of which he was crowned king at Mandoo, under the title of Sultan Kauder Mulwy. By the latter appellation, which designated him as an inhabitant of Malwa, it was probably his wish to obtain the aid of those feelings of pride, which might lead natives of the province to assert its right of independence. He was, however, compelled to seek refuge in Guzerat, when attacked A. D. 1542.
by the Emperor Shere Shah, who placed Shujal Khan, an officer of high rank and character, in the government of Malwa. This Omrah (who among other monuments of his magnificence has left the city of Shujahalpoor, which he founded) was succeeded by his son Mullee Bayized, who after- A. D. 1555.
wards assumed the title of Baz Bahadur, and established for a short period an independent power. Though a brave soldier, he appears to have given himself over to indolence, and to the indulgence of pleasure. His love for Roop Muttee*, a Hindu

* This celebrated female was a dancing-girl of Saharunpoor. She was even more famed for her sense and accomplishments than her beauty. There are the remains of a splendid palace in Mandoo, built by her royal lover for the residence of this favourite.

beauty, was carried to great excess, and led to many acts of extravagant folly, which are still commemorated in popular tales and songs. But Baz Bahadur was roused from such dreams of
A. D. 1560. enjoyment by the arrival of an army from Delhi. He fled to the governor of Asseer, and with his aid, and that of the Mahomedan prince of Berar, he obtained some advantages over the imperial troops; the general of which was forced, in his turn, to retreat. This success, however, was of short duration: another army from Delhi drove
A. D. 1561. him from his country; and its subsequent invasion by Akber in person, put a complete end to the contest. Malwa was annihilated as a separate
A. D. 1567. kingdom, and reduced to the condition of a province, in which it remained, subjected to the same changes and revolutions that affected the other divisions of the empire, till it was conquered by the Mahrattas.

The Mahomedan monarchs of Malwa attained, at one period, a very considerable degree of power. From their coins, of which there are numbers to be obtained, they appear to have assumed all those proud and pompous titles which it is the usage of Mahomedan princes to do. It is not easy, at so remote a period, to judge with accuracy even the general character of their government; but the magnificent ruins of Mandoo*, and the numerous

* It has been already mentioned that the walls of this noble city were in extent thirty-seven miles: I obtained

remains of towns and villages on spots now desolate, prove that this province must, under their sway, have attained very great prosperity. There is one

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part of the records of the zemindars of this city, and the following is, according to one of the oldest papers of this collection, an account taken by measurement of the contents of the whole of the ground within this circumference. The document is rendered more curious, from giving the exact dimensions occupied by buildings, as well as by baths, tanks, rivers, mountains, and cultivations, and thereby enabling us to judge with tolerable correctness of the degree of splendour it had obtained.

The following is the detail of square Begahs within the Fort of Mandoo.

	Begahs.
Nemazur,	2558
Baths,	400
Small Hills or Ridges,	2250
Gardens or Orchards,	363
Mosques,	705
Wells, large and small,	310
King's Palaces,	500
Caravensaries or Serais	305
The Laul Bag, a royal Garden or Pleasure Ground,	200
Twelve Bazar Roads,	147
Tagur Tallau (a great Tank or reservoir,)	910
Small Tanks,	263
Inhabited,	2258
Cultivated,	845
Emaums grant to Zemindar,	125
Begahs	11,416

But the Poran or snburbs of Jaumnea, Huncree, and Nandlah were within the walls, and, as they occupied a space of 2258 Begahs, this added to the above, made

fact, however, certain, that they never completely subdued the Rajpoot princes and petty chiefs in their vicinity, and indeed within the precincts of their kingdom. The bravest and wisest of the princes of this race seem to have pursued the policy of the emperors of Delhi, in regard to these brave Hindus—to have been content with nominal submission, a moderate tribute, and occasional military service. This is proved from the condition in which the Rajpoot chiefs appeared, whenever invited or provoked to opposition, by the weakness or wickedness of their Mahomedan superiors.

A full account of the Rajpoots, who form so great a part of the population of Malwa, will be given hereafter; suffice it to say, many of the tribes in that province boast their descent from the celestial Ramchunder, and are consequently termed the children of the Sun; while others trace to Pooravisee, and deem themselves descendants of the Moon. Some writers, however, deny their title

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the total contents within the limits of this capital 13,674 Begahs of ground, besides the walls, which occupied 2838 Begahs; to which add Sonegaur, containing 500 Begahs, would make the whole contents within the defences of this city 17,013 Begahs. This, computing the Malwa Begah at its present measurement of a square of sixty yards to the begah, makes the contents of the ground encircled by the walls of Mandoo about 12,654 English acres.

even to the rank of Khetri*, that race being, according to them, extinct in this yug or age; but the power the Rajpoots have long enjoyed, has obtained them the highest estimation. They were, to use a metaphorical and flattering phrase of their countrymen, the sword of the Hindu faith. It was not easy to subdue such men; for, though broken by their own dissensions, before and after the Mahomedan invasion, into a thousand petty states, almost every one of which was an object of contest between brothers, yet still every individual was a soldier, who preferred death to disgrace; and though ready to be the servant, scorned to be the slave of any monarch upon earth. They were taught their duties from their most sacred works. In one, the demigod Krishna†, speaking to Arjoon, observes, "A soldier "of the Khetri tribe hath no superior duty to "fighting. Soldier, who art the favourite of God, "engage in such a battle as this; if thou art "slain, thou wilt obtain heaven: if victorious, "thou wilt enjoy a world!"

The government established by the Mahomedan conquerors of India, was not of a character calculated to subdue the spirit of the Rajpoots, had it been its policy to do so; but it was not: that jealousy of their own instruments of success which

* Cshatriya. † The Bhagwat Geeta.

ever accompanies despotic sovereigns, led the first emperors to court into their service this class of Hindus, as a check upon their turbulent soldiers or ambitious Omrahs. The yoke was made light to the Rajas of this tribe: they were treated as the first princes of the empire, and not only their relations, but many of their adherents were raised to rank, honour, and wealth. The concord which such treatment produced was often disturbed, and we find some sanguinary contests between the first Mahomedan monarchs and the Rajpoots. Still the occurrence of rebellion in one of this race was much more rare than that of the Mahomedan Omrahs; and in their willing allegiance to the house of Timur, some of the proudest of the Rajpoot princes so far forgot their religion, and usages, and were so enervated by the luxury, and dazzled with the pomp and power still left to them, as not only to consent, but to deem it an honour for their daughters* to enter the Imperial Haram. Their principal claim, however, to the favour of their Mahomedan sovereigns, was the character they

* This act is nevertheless considered by Hindu writers as a disgrace; and I find in an original manuscript of the late Jye Singh Kychee, a boast that one of his ancestors suffered the greatest distress rather than give his consent to the degrading usage. It is also the boast of the Ranah of Odeypoor, the highest of all the families of this tribe, that there never was an intermarriage with one of that house and a Moghul prince.

upheld as brave and faithful soldiers. This gave to Hindu princes and chiefs, office and authority in different parts of the empire, and their services were usually rewarded with grants of land. To this source may be traced the establishment of some of the principal families in Malwa, many of which were also aided by the influence of the Rajas of Jeypoor, Joudpoor, and Odeypoor*, with one or other of which they are almost all connected.

To shew the character of the internal government of Malwa when the Mahrattas invaded that province, it will be useful to notice some of the predecessors of the Hindu chiefs, and we cannot select better examples than the petty rulers of Ragooghur, Jabooah, and Rutlam.—The Rajas of Ragooghur are of the Kychee tribe of Rajpoots, and boast a proud descent from Pirtee Raj,† of

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* The Princes of Odeypoor are in the early part of the history of Malwa termed Rulers of Chittore—which was the name by which they were known till that celebrated fortress was taken by the Emperor Akber, in A. D. 1567, and ceased to be their capital.

† Pirtee Raja fills a large space in Hindu Chronicles, and his exploits as the sovereign and leader of the Hindus against the Mahomedan invaders of India are a constant and favourite theme of the bards of his tribe. Nor is his fame trusted to tradition alone; several poems have been written upon this monarch, and one of these, the production of a bard who accompanied him in all his actions, is said not only to possess much merit as a poem, but to contain many historical facts; and it is, to my knowledge, conti-

Delhi. They were first settled at Gungraur* in Malwa; but they appear to have had little power or consequence until Ghureeb Doss, one of their ancestors, distinguished himself in the service of Akber, who appointed him to the government of Mooltan, and, in reward for his good conduct, bestowed upon him Seronge and other lands in its vicinity, as a Jaghire, or hereditary estate. The son of this chief, Laljee, was the founder of Rageoghur, which became their capital; and his grandson, Bulbhudder Singh, a man of reputation and influence, was Raja of that place when the Mahrattas first invaded Malwa.

The Jabooah Rajas, though their present representative is of spurious birth, claim in their pedigree a direct descent from the Rhattore princes of Joudpoor; and the high birth and character of some of this family appear to have early recommended them to the service of the Moghul emperors. Bhunjee commanded four hundred horse at Delhi, and his son Kishen Doss was placed in attendance on the prince Allah Udeen, upon whose accession to the throne he became a great favourite. The service he rendered his master in reconquering the possession of Ducca, which had

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nually referred to by Rajpoot chiefs of the present day, as containing what they deem undoubted facts as to the achievements of their ancestors.

* In this fortress they resisted the arms of the Emperor Secunder for twelve years.

been seized by a rebellious governor, was repaid by a grant of five villages in Hindustan, and ten districts in Malwa. He had been settled but a few years in this province when events led to a considerable increase of fortune: he received orders from Delhi to avenge the murder of the family and a number of the followers of a governor of Guzerat, who were plundered and slain by Suka Naig, the Bheel ruler of Jabooah, and Chunderbahn, the Rajpoot chief of Dholitah. What force alone could never have effected against these notorious freebooters, who, strong in their inaccessible country, had long defied all regular attacks, was accomplished by the combined art and courage of Kishen Doss. He assumed the disguise of a horse-dealer from Guzerat, went to Jabooah, and, after selling some remarkably fine horses at low prices to the chief, proposed, upon the ground of pretended gratitude, to give him a feast. The invitation was accepted, the usual excesses took place, and Suka Naig, and all his principal adherents, were put to death, and their strong hold taken. The return made by his sovereign was a grant of the possessions of Jabooah, and a subsequent present of royal ensigns, and high titles, which gave him a proud rank among the Hindu chiefs of Malwa. This family remained, with the common revolutions of such petty states, till the invasion of the Mahrattas. Before that period, however, it had separated into

several small principalities (of which Ainjherra was one), owing to a mode usual among this race, of alienating districts for the support of younger branches of the family.

Ruttun Singh, son of Mohun Doss, a prince descended from the Joudpoor family, gained by his address and gallantry, the good opinion of the Emperor Shah Jehan, so much that he gave him a grant of Rutlam *, Sillanah, and other districts in their vicinity. This prince fell near Oojein, where his loyalty led him to encounter the army of Aurungzebe †, when the latter rebelled against his father. The fidelity of Ruttun Singh was rewarded by Shah Jehan, who gave those lands, which had only been before a Jaidad, or grant for military service, in free gift to his posterity.

This family remained in possession of their principality till the invasion of the Mahrattas; but, according to the usage of the Rajpoots, several districts were alienated, to provide for the younger sons; and the Rajas of Seeta Mhow, of Sillanah, of Kachee Barode, and Mooltan, are all descendants of Ruttun Singh: the elder brother of the family continuing to rule over the town and fine province of Rutlam, and to receive a general obedience and respect from the junior branches.

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* It is asserted that he founded the present capital of the district. He probably raised it from a village to a town by making it the place of his residence.

† Bernier gives a particular account of this action.

These instances (and there are many similar) will suffice to shew the nature and foundation of that power and influence which a number of Rajpoot chiefs possessed in Malwa. The causes which led to the defection of some of this powerful tribe from the house of Timur, to which they had long yielded obedience, are easily traced. The example of that toleration and liberal indulgence which Akber extended to his Hindu subjects, was followed by his immediate successors; but the spirit of a religion established by the sword, one of whose first tenets enjoined conversion, death, or heavy tribute to infidels, and above all to the worshippers of idols, ill accorded with a policy that was grounded on maxims which made no distinction between the latter and the faithful. This feeling shewed itself on the occurrence of wars or disputes with the Hindus; but, while the sovereign himself was free from bigotry, its action was very limited. The Emperor Jehangire shewed no preference to any religion. His son Shah Jehan, in his earlier years, evinced similar sentiments; and, when in mature age he became an attentive observer of the forms, if not a true believer in the tenets, of the Mahomedan faith, he continued (with one casual deviation) his wonted toleration to his subjects. The eldest son of this monarch, the celebrated and unfortunate Dara, wrote a work, the object of which was, to reconcile the tenets of Mahomed and Brahma; and his brothers appear to

have been as far removed from bigotry as himself, with the exception of Aurungzebe, a prince whose attainment and exercise of power present perhaps as many lessons as the life of any monarch that ever reigned. Without presuming to strike the balance between his good and bad actions, or to decide, whether he had a just claim to his great reputation, or was, throughout his long reign, an actor, and, with every artificial accomplishment for the great scene in which fortune had placed him, deficient in that strength which belongs alone to him who plays a natural part, we may pronounce, on the ground of the measures he adopted to promote his ambitious views, that his early professions of zeal for the faith of Mahomet were merely meant to increase the number of his adherents, by placing his conduct on this essential point in strong contrast with that of his brothers and rivals for imperial power. That Aurungzebe was solely governed, in his contests with them, by worldly considerations, is proved by one fact. That affected, unforgiving, and ungovernable zeal which was pleaded as his excuse for imbruing his hands in the blood of the gallant and generous Dara, was forgotten the moment that crime had secured him the throne; and the completest indulgence was granted to all his idolatrous subjects, whom we find, in the first years of his reign, as much, if not more favoured than Mahomedans. This also was, no doubt, the result of policy.

But a narrow policy, which looked for expedients to remedy every evil, was not sufficient to save the family of Timur from that ruin with which it was now threatened. Its power could alone have been preserved by a firmness and wisdom founded on true virtue and greatness of mind, which disdained a temporary advantage, however alluring, that was to be gained by a departure from principles essential to the general interests of the empire. How opposite was the conduct of Aurungzebe. Irritation at the successful depredations of the Mahrattas,—the suspicion of these freebooters enjoying the good wishes, if not the secret aid of others,—or a spirit of bigotry, perhaps sincere, but more probably assumed, to revive the attachment of the Mahomedans, led him to attempt, by the most unjustifiable means, the conversion of the whole of his Hindu subjects. Few yielded to his persuasion or threats; but the remainder were visited, as a punishment for their obstinacy, with the extortion of heavy taxes and fines. The produce of these impositions was expected to be immense. The public revenue had greatly decayed in the reign of Aurungzebe; and the mean motive of desiring to fill his treasury, has been imputed to this sovereign, as the ground of a measure, which, even unsuccessful as it was (for it could not be carried into full effect), lost him the temper and attachment of a great majority of his subjects. The chief historical record that has been pre-

served, connected with this transaction, is the bold and animated appeal made by Jeswunt Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, in his letter to the Emperor.* After recalling to his memory the opposite conduct of Akber, of Jehangire, and his father Shah Jehan, and reprobating the attempt to collect a revenue upon the consciences of men, or to vex the devotee and anchoret with a tax upon his belief, the Hindu prince observes, "If your Majesty places any faith "in those books by distinction called divine, you "will there be instructed that God is the God of "all mankind, not of Mahomedans alone. The "Pagan and Musaulman are equal in his pre- "sence; distinctions of colour are of his ordination. "It is he who gives existence. In your temples "it is in his name that the voice calls to prayer; "in the house of images, the bell is shaken:—still "he is the object of our adoration. To vilify, "therefore, the religion, or the customs of other "men, is to set at nought the pleasure of the "Almighty."

Such were the sentiments that became general amongst all the Hindus, whose international disputes were forgotten, in a sense of the danger which threatened their common faith. The error

* There are many translations of this letter, of which the original, as well as a very literal translation, will be found in the Asiatic Miscellany.

he had committed, could not be retrieved by Aurungzebe; and to the feeling of indignation which his conduct had kindled, was added that of contempt for the authority of his weak successors. Existing rule is always in some degree unpopular, for it seems to be a law in the moral as well as the physical world, that pressure should produce resistance and reaction. But here there were more than common motives. The Hindu princes, subject to the throne of Delhi, while they were almost conciliated to their condition, by the indulgent kindness and toleration of their conquerors, and by a participation (for such they enjoyed) in the wealth and splendour of the empire, were deterred from rebellion, by a contemplation of the power of the descendants of Timur. At the very moment when that began to decline, and new enemies arose in every quarter, a senseless bigotry had resort to persecution. Thus invited by weakness, and provoked by injury, we are not surprised to find, that the Rajpoot princes and chiefs of Jeypoor, Marwar, Mewar, and Malwa, so far from continuing to be that defence they had before proved themselves of the empire, were either secretly or openly the supporters of the Mahratta invaders, to whose first invasion of Malwa, we are told by every Persian or Hindu writer that notices the subject, hardly any opposition was given; and we possess many testimonies

to shew, that they chiefly attributed their success, on this occasion, to the action of religious feeling.

The celebrated Raja Jye Singh, prince of Jeypoor, greatly contributed (though, perhaps, without intending it) to the conquest of Malwa, and indeed of Hindustan, by the Mahrattas. The correspondence between this chief and the first Bajerow would, if obtained, throw light upon this period of history. It is said* to have commenced in a communication very characteristic of the times and the parties:—the ruler of the Mahratta state sent a verse of the Purana to Jye Singh, which may be literally translated—"Thou art like the cloud which drinketh "the waters of the sea, and returneth them "with thunder to fertilize the earth. The moun-"tains, in dread of Indra, fly to thee for pro-"tection. Thou art the tree of desires. Thou "art the sea whence springeth the tree of desires, "who can tell thy depth! I have no power to "describe the depth of the ocean; but in all thy "actions remember August Muni."

* This anecdote was communicated to me by several intelligent Mahrattas, all of whom told me they had no doubt of its authenticity. This manner of conveying their secret sentiments by the transmission of a verse from one of their holy volumes, is common with Hindu princes. The obligation claimed or made in such a mode, has a character at once mysterious and sacred.

According to Hindu mythology, the demigod August Muni drank up the sea. The communication, therefore, though flattering, conveyed a metaphorical, but distinct warning of what might happen if he opposed the Brahmin sway.

Jye Singh's answer, taken from the same sacred volume, was as follows:

"If the tribe of Brahma sin with me, I forgive "them. This pledge I hold sacred. It was of "no consequence that August Muni drank up the "sea; but if God should doom the walls that re-"tain the ocean to be thrown down, then the "world would be destroyed, and what would be-"come of August Muni?"

The Hindus believe the sea to be walled in; and the allusion to the consequences of that element being let loose upon the earth, is considered, as addressed to one of the sacred tribe of Brahma, whose duty it was to preserve, instead of destroying, the general order, to be peculiarly apposite. But it was the object of the proud Rajpoot, while he gave encouragement and accepted the proffered friendship, to retort the threat by warning Bajerow of the consequences that would ensue from breaking down long-established authority.

These facts have importance, not merely as they account historically, which is the chief object, for the first establishment of the Mahrattas in Malwa,

the defence of which had been almost wholly committed to Rajpoots; but as they shew the effect produced by an attack upon the religion of that warlike and superstitious race of men. It led them to welcome freebooters to their homes: nor have the great miseries they have since endured, obliterated a recollection of the chief causes which led to this revolution. Sentiments of gratitude towards the emperors who honoured and favoured them, are mixed with indignation at the attempt made to alter their religion; and their bards and minstrels*, who are their only historians, still relate the oppression and injustice which overthrew their temples to establish the edifices of another faith, and raised a revenue on their belief, rendered as insulting as it was oppressive, by being levied on all their religious ceremonies, even to those performed over the dead. These national legends usually pass from their wrongs to a more animated strain, and record the fame of those heroes, who overthrew the mosques of the tyrants, which had been erected in spots sacred to their ancient deities, and restored the hallowed ground to that worship to which it had been so long dedicated. This theme is familiar, in a degree hardly

* Charúns and Bhâts. A full account of these classes, who in Malwa fill an important space in the Hindu community, will be given hereafter.

to be credited, among the Hindus of Malwa; and the strength in which the feeling exists, reconciles us to believe it was sufficient to make the inhabitants of this country consent to become the authors of their own ruin, in the introduction of the power of the Mahrattas, whose invasion of their country no lesser motive could have induced them to encourage and support.

CHAPTER III.

Mahratta Invasion of Malwa.

THE whole of the accounts, written or published, of the early progress of the Mahrattas in Malwa, are vague and general. They can hardly be said to give more than the dates of their invasion of that province, and these are neither correct nor complete.

From the commencement of the reign of Aurungzebe, the Mahomedan writers cease to be so minute in their details, as they are at former and more prosperous periods of the Moghul empire. The theme was not inviting, and their hostile feelings towards the Mahrattas have made them general and unfaithful narrators of the success of that people. The blank which this has left is not supplied by the Hindu writers: these, and particularly the Mahrattas, preserve no record even of their victories; they are in this respect, as in others, the slaves of usage. Short letters on family affairs, or on public events of the moment, destroyed or forgotten as soon as written, are the only efforts of the pen of common writers; while

the more learned content themselves with reading their sacred volumes* and mythological fables; or if they write, it is but in imitation (to flatter some prince or chief) of these extravagant ebullitions, never dreaming, seemingly, of embodying the nation's fame in an historical work, or even of blending that correct series of the names of their rulers, which they generally preserve, with a clear and authentic account of the principal events of each reign.

The history of the Mahrattas, from the time of their great leader Sevajee†, to the battle of Panniput‡, furnished ample ground for the gratification of pride, supposing what occurred to be written in the most plain and unadorned language. Even after their defeat by the Afghans, the actions of Mulhar Row, the first chief of the Holkar family, of Madhajee Sindia, and of Nana

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* Puranas.

† Almost all English readers are familiar with the name of Sevajee, the founder of the Mahratta empire, who, in A. D. 1646, was encouraged by the weakness of the Mahomedan sect to rebel. In 1674 he declared himself independent; and when he died, in 1683, he had established his authority over the greatest part of the Concan, a country which lies between the great range of hills which bounds the Deckan on the West and the sea-coast, and is now under the Bombay government.

‡ The combined Mahratta forces were defeated at Panniput, (a village fifty miles North-west of Delhi,) by Ahmed Shah Abdalli, A. D. 1761.

Furnavese, merited to be preserved by their countrymen. Their deeds, however, have been almost entirely trusted to tradition, and this by a [illegible]ple who are not only very generally instructed, [illegible]t who are minute to a degree in all that [illegible] management of the large territories [illegible] have been subject to their govern[illegible]. [illegible] Diaries * found amid the archives of [illegible] related to the revenue affairs of the [illegible] they are complete for the last century, [illegible] most correct record of receipts, dis[illegible] names of officers employed, and dates [illegible] transactions.

In [illegible] invasion of Central India, the war [illegible] carried on was evidently against [illegible]ent †, and not the inhabitants. They

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[illegible] are called Roze Kurd, a corrupt compound [illegible], which means the Acts of the day. Mr. [illegible] assistant of the Commissioner in the Deckan, [illegible] searched the records, states that these Roze Kurds go back as far as A.D. 1720, but are not very complete for the first ten years. He also notices two Calendars which he had found, containing the principal events of the Mahratta nation for two hundred years; but speaks of them as barren and unsatisfactory documents.

† In the course of researches for information regarding the first Mahratta invasion of Malwa, it was found that Sheo Lal, the representative of the former Zemindars of Mandoo, had preserved, when almost all other documents were lost, many of the papers relative to the districts of which his family had charge. In one of the oldest of these, which contains the Re-

appear, at this stage of their power, to have taken a large share of the revenue, but not to have destroyed, like more barbarous invaders, the source from which it was drawn; for if they had, it could not have recovered so rapidly, as we find from revenue records that it did. But there is in the whole of the proceedings of this period, the strongest ground to conclude, that they were acting with the concurrence and aid of the Hindu chiefs of the empire, whose just reasons for discontent with the reigning monarch, Aurungzebe, have been noticed. This fact, indeed, as far as relates to Sevai Jye Singh, Raja of Doondar, or

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venue account of Dhurmpooree for A. D. 1690, we find the revenue of that district (which lies to the North of the Nerbudda, and immediately South of Mandoo) was reduced by an incursion of the Mahrattas from the amount [illegible] thousand and seventy-two rupees, to that of [illegible] seven hundred and eighty-nine rupees and [illegible]. Their absence in A. D. 1691, caused the revenue of the district to amount to seventy-two thousand [illegible] thirty-nine rupees and nine annas. It rose still higher next year, amounting to eighty-nine thousand six hundred and eighty-four rupees; but a return of the Southern Plunderers, as they are termed in this revenue record, in A. D. 1694, brought it as low as thirty thousand and two rupees: while their ceasing to molest the district the ensuing year, raised it nearly to its wonted value. Documents similar to that quoted, furnish the most authentic account we can obtain of the first predatory excursions of the Mahrattas; for they do not merely give the date, but the character of the enterprise.

Jeypoor*, is distinctly stated in several contemporary † authorities.

According to the authority followed, the Mahrattas continued for seven years their incursions into this part of Malwa, and only abandoned their annual attacks of the province on the advance of Sevai Jye Singh. This celebrated Hindu soldier and statesman belonged to a family which the policy of Aurungzebe had raised, chiefly in opposition to Jeswunt Singh, the prince of Joudpoor, to whom his hatred was as violent as it was impla-

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* This great tract of country, which lies to the North of Harrowtee and Mewar, is properly called Doondar. It was, however, known better under the name of Amber, which it took from its capital, and is now called Jeypoor, from the noble city founded by Sevai Jye Singh, which has become the residence of his successors.

† In a manuscript written by an ancestor of the present Zemindar of Mandoo (which is preserved with his revenue records) it is asserted, that the Mahrattas in the year of the Hejira 1108, or A. D. 1696, ascended the Naloha Ghaut, took Mandoo, and engaged the Mahomedan troops at Dhar, which fort they are stated to have reduced, after a three months siege, by springing a mine. Two persons, named Shah Doolah and Abdallah Khan, who are termed Shah Zadahs, or princes, enjoyed at this period the government of Malwa; and it appears from a chronological list of the governors of that province taken from a Persian tract, that the Nabob Ameer Khan, who is styled Soobahdar, or governor of Malwa, was succeeded by his sons Doollah Khan and Sadoollah Khan, who were left unsupported to withstand the invaders, and, after an opposition of several months, were compelled to retire to Bhopal. Accord-

cable. But the friendship of this emperor was generally ominous of evil. The grandfather* of Jye Singh, who had been employed successfully to check the progress of Sevajee, was first the instrument of the ambition, and afterwards the victim† of the jealous fears of Aurungzebe; and though Sevai Jye Singh professed obedience and allegiance, there is every reason to believe he maintained that secret correspondence and understanding, which all Mahomedan writers accused his ancestor of having established with the Mahrattas. It is stated on a respectable Hindu authority‡, that the Shahza-

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ing to the Hindu record, Dhar capitulated, and its defenders were allowed to go where they chose, with their private property. Sadoollah Khan, we find in Eraduc Khan's Memoirs, was Soubahdar of Malwa in A. D. 1707; and this author mentions that he himself was Killahdar, or commandant, of Mandoo in that year, a proof that the incursions of the Mahrattas were merely predatory. Scott, in his excellent History of the Deckan, does not notice any of these incursions. On the contrary, he observes, (vol. ii. p. 79.) that the expedition into Dhamoonee, a district of the Sugur province, under Bhora Krishna, in A. D. 1702, was the first occasion on which the Mahrattas crossed the Nerbudda: but there can be no mistake in the records I have quoted of the plundering of the Pergunnah of Dhurmpooree in the preceding note.

* Jye Singh, usually distinguished from others of the same name by the appellation of Mirza Raja.

† He is believed to have been poisoned by the Emperor's orders.

‡ This is asserted in the manuscript memoir given me by the Zemindar of Mandoo.

deo and Dhar led the Emperor by their representations to doubt the fidelity of Jye Singh; who, to contradict their assertions, volunteered to expel the invaders from Malwa. His offer was accepted, and he marched against them. It is believed that he secretly informed their leaders of the motives of his conduct, and solicited them to make only a show of resistance, intimating that their return, when times were more favourable, would be facilitated. His wishes were obeyed, hardly any opposition was given, the Mahrattas retreated to the Deckan, and Jye Singh, after remaining six months in Malwa, returned to Hindustan.

These events* are stated to have taken place in A. D. 1698. The invaders returned in a few years, and the standard† of Oudajee Puar was planted at Mandoo. He, however, was soon com-
A. D. 1709. pelled to retreat, and the Mahrattas for some time do not appear to have disturbed that province, till the advancement of ‡Ballajee Bishwa-

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* This occurrence is not mentioned by Major Scott, but I have already noticed the character of the Mahomedan writers from whose works his history is composed. In volume ii. page 107, the Mahrattas are stated to have "swarmed like "ants or locusts from the Nerbudda to the Deckan."

† The term in the manuscript from which this is taken, is Taunah, which implies a small party with a flag, put in possession of a post, village, or town.

‡ Ballajee Bishwanath, the first Peishwah, was raised to his high office A. D. 1714, and died in April 1720.

nath to the office of Paishwah, who restored their power; and one of the earliest measures of his son and successor, Bajerow Bullal, was to send a strong force, commanded by Ramchunder Guneiss*, to lay waste the country, and collect tribute from the princes and government officers North of the Nerbudda.

From what has been said it would appear, that though Malwa was invaded a few years before the death of Aurungzebe, the authority of the Mahrattas was not established in that province till the reign of Mahomed Shah. But, though no permanent arrangement, or appropriation of specific territories to the respective chieftains, was made † till A. D. 1732, the country was often overrun; and we find in the Poona records, th[illegible]e end of the year 1725, several office[illegible]nominated

* Ramchunder Guneiss, who comma[illegible]d in this expedition, was a very able man, and afterwards e[illegible]yed with Ranajee Sindia. He is sometimes confounded with a leader of the same name, who was of the Paishwah's tribe (a Kokun Brahmin), held the office of Beenee Wallah, or Quartermaster-general, and commanded the Paishwah's troops when these were united (A. D. 1773.) with Madhajee Sindia and Tuckajee Holkar in Hindustan.

† It probably owed in a great degree its partial exemption, during this period, to the power and influence of Jye Singh, who, I find from a settlement of disputed limits between the villages of Sagrod and Bajour on the Chumbul, was Nazim, or governor of Malwa in A. D. 1710-11, and probably for some years afterwards.

to collect tribute, and some districts in Malwa were actually granted to favoured individuals. An expedition had been sent three years before, under Oudajee Puar, to reduce Guzerat: and we discover in the correspondence between that chief, the Sahoo Raja, and the Paishwah, that the former had orders to establish the customary Mahratta imposts* over Malwa, and orders were addressed to the different officers of each district, authorizing Oudajee to collect this part of the revenue, which was levied by him, over the greatest part of the province, two years before Bajerow Bullal entered the country with the more serious design of making it an entire conquest.

It is here necessary to interrupt the narration, to not[illegible]ciples upon which the invaders of Malwa n[illegible]ell as to understand the character of [illegible]nment they established. The contests carried [illegible] by Sevajee and his successors did not differ [illegible]e from those of other nations in

* Chouth was, as the term implies, the fourth of the revenue. The Sirdaishmookee (which amounted to 10 per cent. on the collection) was a right of the officer called Daishmookh, a name which, literally translated, means the head of the province. I cannot any where find a satisfactory account why this specific claim, usually attached to a particular family in each province, became a general one which the Mahrattas made on every country they invaded; but, from their habits, its having been claimed and granted to one of their leaders, is a quite sufficient reason for its being exacted by all on the assumed ground of usage.

the mode of warfare, than in the manner in which the army was paid, its commanders rewarded, and the different countries they invaded, were plundered, divided, and settled. Raised by the genius of Sevajee to the proud rank of being first the scourge, and afterwards the destroyer of the Mahomedan empire, the cause of the Mahrattas had, in all its early stages, the aid of religious feeling. It was a kind of Holy War; and the appearance of Brahmins at the head of their armies gave, in the first instance, force to this impression. This people have been too generally described: there cannot be more opposite characters than we meet with among them, particularly in the great classes who have shared the power of the state, the Brahmins, and soldiers of the Kheiri and Sudra tribes.* The Mahratta Brahmin is, from diet, habit, and education, men, active, and intelligent, but generally avaricious, and often treacherous. His life, if in public business, must, from the system of his government, be passed in efforts to deceive, and to detect others in deceiving. Such occupations

* The Peishwahs, the Southern Jaghiredars, the principal officers of state, and chiefs who remained in the Mahratta countries South of the Taptee, were Brahmins. The Bhonslahs, who early possessed themselves of Nagpoor, the Gaickwar of Guzerat, and the family of Puar, who settled in Malwa, were of the Kheiri tribe. The Sudra and Lolka family were of the Sudra.

raise cunning to the place of wisdom, and debase, by giving a mean and interested bent to the mind, all those claims to respect and attachment, upon which great and despotic power can alone have any permanent foundation.

The history of the Mahratta nation abounds with instances of Brahmins rising from the lowest stations (usually that of agents*) to be ministers, and sometimes rulers, of a state: but their character undergoes little change from advancement, and, in general, all its meanest features remain.

Though often leading armies, the Mahratt Brahmins have not, with some remarkable† exceptions, gained a high reputation for courage, and if not arrogant or cruel, they have often merited the charge of being unfeeling and oppressive.

The plain uninstructed Mahratta Sudra, or Kheti, enters upon his career as a soldier in the same dress, and with the same habits, with which he tills his field or attends his flocks; and he has, generally speaking, preserved, throughout revolutions that have at one time raised him to the highest consideration and power, and again cast him back to his former occupations, the same

* The corresponding Persian term by which a person of this class is called, is Karkoon, which signifies "a man of business."

† Purseram Bhow, who co-operated with Lord Cornwallis in the war against Tippoo Sultan, A. D. 1792, was a Brahmin, and a man of extraordinary personal courage.

simplicity of character. This may be referred to the nature of Hindu institutions, to the example of Sevajee and his leaders, and to the advantage derived from habits that gave facility to conquest, by placing him in strong contrast with the proud and formal Mahomedan; by associating him with the Hindu population of the countries he invaded; and by preventing his progress ever being impeded by that pomp, luxury, or pride, which form so often an incumbrance, if not an obstacle, to the most successful conquerors. That the Mahratta soldier was more distinguished by art, than by valour; that he gloried as much in rapid flight as in daring attack, is not denied by the warmest panegyrist of his own tribe; but though these facts are admitted, and farther, that he was often mean and sordid, it is contended, and with truth, that he had many excellent qualities. Few could claim superiority to him in patience under fatigue, hunger, and thirst, and in that plain manliness of character which remained unchanged by success or adversity: nor can we deny to the Mahrattas, in the early part of their history, and before their extensive conquests had made their last and mixed armies cease to be national, the merit of conducting their Cossack* inroads into

* The term Cossack is used because it is the one by which the Mahrattas describe their own species of warfare. In their language, the word Cossakee (borrowed, like many of their terms, from the Moghuls) means "predatory."

other countries with a consideration to the inhabitants, which had been deemed incompatible with that terrible and destructive species of war.—But this leads us to a view of the principles on which they acted.

Unlike in their origin and habits to the Goths and Vandals that devastated Europe, or those Tartar tribes who have so often conquered and destroyed the kingdoms of Asia, the first Mahrattas were driven to arms by oppression, and tempted to continue in the exercise of their new profession, by the proved weakness of their oppressors. The character and constitution of the early power made it impossible for them to maintain themselves in many of the countries they were able to plunder; but the ability to destroy generated a right to share in the produce. Hence all those Mahratta sources* of revenue, which they introduced into India. Whenever these were admitted, the country had a respite from their ravages; but we cannot believe that the able chiefs, who first inflicted these heavy taxes upon the revenues of the Moghul empire, ever viewed as more than a temporary expedient, which, enabling them to maintain great armies, and spread their agents and influence, afforded them the means of progressive encroachment. As suc-

* Chouth, Sirdashmookee, &c.

it was admirably suited to the times, and to their peculiar condition and character. By obtaining peace in one quarter, they were at liberty to carry their arms into another. They had also, through this means, an opportunity, which they thoroughly understood how to use, of fomenting divisions in families and states. From the house of Timur, to the lowest of the Rajpoot chiefs within their sphere, we find every party had a secret or open supporter in a Mahratta leader or agent. The character and actions of this people were in all respects singular; they had indeed few, if any, similar features in common with other nations. Those means which the pride of conquerors have often rejected, seem always to have been used in preference by this extraordinary race: not merely the desperate and discontented were invited to their standard, but robbers and plunderers were courted as auxiliaries, and allowed to act for a period in their own mode, and for their own advantage. To insinuate themselves by wiles into a share of the management of a district or a country, and to make a party amongst its inhabitants, were deemed better than using force, even when the latter was in their power; and in effecting these objects their patience and humility were great aids. They were content at first to divide the government, as well as revenues, with the Hindu chiefs of the military class they found established, trusting to time and intrigue for their gradual reduction. This policy

was never more remarkably exemplified than in the progress of their establishment in Central India. They assumed at first, in their manners and sentiments, the exact shape that was best calculated to win the Hindu population of that country. The Rajpoot princes and lords were conciliated by every concession to their pride, and to those forms of dignity which they had learnt from association with the Moghul government; while the lower classes, particularly the landholders and cultivators, saw in the Mahrattas (amidst all their excesses) beings of their own order, who, though they had risen to power and dominion, continued to preserve the strongest attachment to the manners and usages of those village communities in which they were born. It could not but be gratifying to this class of inhabitants, to find that the principal leaders of the conquerors appeared to place more value in their names of Potail (or head man) and Putwarree (or register), which they derived from being hereditary officers of some petty village in their native country, than in all the high-sounding titles they could attain. The constitution of the government and army of the Mahrattas was, however, more calculated to destroy, than to create an empire. Their first chief, Sevajee, had no pretensions but those of a successful leader, and his latter years were marked by severe reverses. Similar feelings and circumstances had attached many of his tribe to his person; and,

before his death, enough was done to embody the Mahrattas as a nation, and to give them a union, which was cemented by the cruel and implacable character of their enemies. The tortures and disgrace inflicted on Sambha, the son of their first prince, with many acts of a similar nature, gave a common sentiment of indignation and revenge, that supplied for the moment the place of better ties. The fabric, however, had no foundation. The chiefs were, from the first, almost equal; and as the armies they led depended principally on success for pay, the leaders were necessarily invested with their powers for the collection of tribute, or revenues, from the provinces into which they were sent. But though a share* was claimed by Government, the

* I have obtained the perusal of all the old papers of the Puars of Dhar; and find by the Sunnuds, or orders, granted to Oudajee Puar, in A. D. 1724, by Bajerow, empowering him to collect Choute in Malwa and Guzerat, that he was allowed for the expense of his army one half of his collections; the other went to the State. The following is a literal translation of this general, or rather sweeping Sunnud.

"To the high Raja Sri Oudajee Puar, may Lutchmee the Beautiful increase your fortune and dignity! from Bajerow Ballal, Minister (Purdhan), be blessed! in the year of Fuslee 1123 †.

"The half of the Mokassa (75 per cent. of the Choute) of the countries of Guzerat and Malwa belongs to the (Huzoorooni) court; half is granted to you as Sermam, (or for the support of the troops). You are our commander, and our trust is in

† Hindu account, which differs seven years from the Mahomedan.

application of the greater part in the payment of his troops and other expenses, raised the successful general into a ruler of the countries he had conquered. This every where produced the same effects, and the public interest was lost sight of in the desire of individuals to promote their own ambition. The early example of the Paishwah's usurpation was followed almost by all to whom opportunity offered; and this was aided by the form of their village governments (which is probably the oldest of Hindu institutions) having been carried into the state: every office, from that of Paishwah, or prime minister, to the lowest employ, became hereditary. This practice, by giving rights, limited patronage, and weakened the heads of the empire, among whom divisions early arose; but, instead of declining, the state appeared for a long period to prosper the more

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"you; be happy with what has been bestowed upon you.
"Given the 5th of Rubbee ul Awul. There is no occasion
"to write more."

This was obviously given at the commencement of an expedition, as a guide and authority how to act on success: for I find among the same manuscripts no less than one hundred and fifty Orders, dated A. D. 1730, from Bajerow to the Mahgers of the towns and districts, from Bundelcund East to the Ahmedabad West, and as far North as Marwar, directing the payment of Choute and Sirdaishmookee to Gudajee Puar. These were evidently given after the country had been overrun. I conclude that this authentic record may be taken as an example of the usual process.

from that spirit of action which was excited by the clashing interests of the chiefs who shared in its anomalous administration. The Brahmins who presided over it had, to use the strong expression of a Mahomedan writer, "converted the peaceful ord of their order into a bow-string." But, notwithstanding the military reputation which some the Paishwahs added to their other pretensions supreme authority, all that superior intelligence which their habits and education gave em, was unequal to keep in check the ambition f enterprising chiefs; who, intoxicated with success, soon forgot their obligations to the Brahmin inces by whom they were elevated to command. One part of the policy of the Paishwahs nded greatly to accelerate the independence of ese leaders:—the fear of their disturbing the eace of their native country, or consuming its resources, led to their constant employment in foreign expeditions, where they were subject to little r no control; and to attain the object of keeping a ccessful general and his adherents at a distance, e superior was satisfied with nominal allegiance. This is a short statement of the principal of se causes which led, at a very early date, to a ead of Mahratta authority over all India, and the rise of many chiefs of that nation into e exercise of the functions, if they did not assume the name, of princes. Broken and disjointed as they appeared, they still, however, retained

some general motives which led to their occasional union.* Nor were these quite forgotten till success had destroyed their enemies, and they were impelled, by the continued action of that system which had raised them to power, to prey upon and destroy each other; and even then they never changed their nominal relations as members of or confederacy, but, on the contrary, seemed to cherish them in every extreme, with a prejudice that almost approximated to religious feeling. One cause of this was a strong attachment to the country of their birth. Whether in Hindustan or Malwa, they continually kept up an intimate intercourse with their families and kindred tribes in their native districts; and the original links by which the community was bound, were constantly revived and strengthened by ties which operate with great force upon Hindus, as no people are more strongly and virtuously attached to their connexions than this race; nor is the bond destroyed or even weakened by one party reaching high power, and the other remaining in comparative obscurity.

* A Mahomedan writer, remarking upon the tendency to union which distinguished the Mahratta confederacy, even amidst all their divisions, observes, "that the stubborn ma-"terials retained their nature, and, like unto the dissevered "particles of the same substance, had always a propensity "to reunite. Or, as we are told (he adds) of the serpent, "when cut asunder, that the dismembered parts have a sepa-"rate existence, and seek again incorporation."

The Paishwahs owed little of that real or nominal obedience, which they to the last preserved as heads of the Mahratta empire, to their being of the sacred race of Brahma. On the contrary, though (as has been noticed) this aided impression in the first instance, there can be no doubt that the Brahmins of the Mahratta state have lost, by their grasp at worldly power, much of that respect and awe which is usually granted their tribe by Hindus, when they preserve their ginal character of spiritual instructors. But attachment, if not allegiance, which all classes for the Paishwah, as chief officer of the te, though greatly impaired, was not destroy- it was always, when threatened with misfor- ne, their watchword of union. This cherished timent was never shewn more forcibly than ithin the last few years; and, with more of wis- e and talent in its object, it might have saved confederacy from destruction, of which it was e main link.

The incursions of the Mahrattas into Malwa, the death of Aurungzebe, have been noticed, ll as that of A. D. 1721, at which time the nce was ruled by a manager, on the part of elebrated Nizam ul Mulk.* This Omrah had

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* Asoph Jah Nizam-ul-Mulk was appointed to be Soubahdar Malwa in A. D. 1717, in the short reign of Ruffee-ul-

A. D. 1722. been confirmed in the office of Soubahdar, or governor, by Mahomed Shah; but soon afterwards this high station was taken from him, and given to Raja Girdhur Bahadur*, who was A. D. 1724. some time afterwards attacked and defeated by an army of Mahrattas, under Chimnajee Pundit† and Oudajee Puar. These chiefs proceeded to attack the town of Sarungpoor, the Mahomedan governor of which was glad to purchase their retreat by giving them fifteen thousa rupees; and this amount (which was probal the utmost the town could pay) became, fr an usage very characteristic of Mahratta c quest, the sum‡ fixed for their future ann demand.

The Mahrattas at this period ravaged at lar through both the provinces of Guzerat§ a

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* Girdhur Bahadur was a Brahmin of the Nuggur trib originally from Guzerat.

† Chimnajee Pundit was brother to the Paishwah Baj row; and it appears from a Diary in the Poona records the year 1729, that he was in Malwa, and he had p been there some time.

‡ This sum is termed in the Persian manuscripts "neem Sea," or "an Account of Plunder," and the letter the two Persian words, in their numerical power, give the of transaction Hejira 1141, or A. D. 1728.

§ The country of Guzer[illegible] quered in A. D. 172[illegible], by s[illegible] Kuddum Bandiah and Pillaj[illegible] present dynasty. Pillajee [illegible]

Malwa, and their complete reduction of the latter was greatly aided by the policy of Nizam-ul-Mulk, who appears to have desired to plant this nation as a barrier between the Deckan and Hindustan. Though it is likely this chief had not the power of stemming the tide of desolation, he had that of turning it, for the moment, from the countries under his own immediate sway to those of his enemies, and such he considered the Emperor Mahomed Shah and his court. This situation of affairs tempted the ambition of the Paishwah Bajerow, who, having marched from Poona A.D. 1731. with a large army, made himself master of the provinces of Nemaur and Malwa. In the latter he was opposed by Dia Bahadur: but the A.D. 1732. defeat* and death of that officer, who had succeeded his relation Raja Ghirdur,† gave this province to the Mahrattas. Mahomed Khan Bungush, who was next appointed Soubahdar,

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in vain attempted to arrest their progress; and Sevai Jye Singh, Raja of Jeypoor, who was nominated to supersede him, either from conceiving opposition hopeless, or from entertaining (as he is accused of doing by all Mahomedan authors) a secret friendship and understanding with the enemy, prevailed upon the Emperor to appoint Bajerow Soubahdar of Malwa. But this did not take place till the horse of the Paishwah had laid waste the countries of Ag and Allahabad, and the Imperial armies had bee foiled in their efforts to expel them from th province.

These events bring us to a new era in Mal ratta history. Their rights as powerful plunderers had been long before recognized, and a share the revenues of the greater part of the empi had been allotted them in the vain hope of pu chasing safety for the remainder. Their ruler wa now nominated to the government of one of th chief provinces of Hin This, it was true he had first conque levied no more tha appears to have mate title to go peror. The pe been noticed i played, than on

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India. Bajerow and his principal leaders, content with the profit and substance of what they had attained, so far from weakening impression, or alarming prejudice, by the assumption of rank and state, seem to have increased in their professions of humility, as they advanced in power. They affected a scrupulous sense of inferiority in all their intercourse and correspondence with the Emperors, and with their principal chiefs, particularly the Rajpoot princes. The Mahratta leaders, indeed, not only submitted to be treated, in all points of form and ceremony, as the inferiors of those whose countries they had despoiled and usurped, but in hardly any instance considered the right of conquest as a sufficient title to the smallest possession. Grants for every usurpation were sought, and obtained, from those who possessed the local sovereignty. By this mode of proceeding, which was singularly suited to the feelings of a people like the inhabitants of India, who may be generally described as inveterate in their habits and abhorrent of change, they evaded many of those obstacles which had impeded former conquerors. But their internal relations with each other appear still more remarkable than those they established with foreign states. We shall have occasion to shew, that Mahomed Shah, before he granted Bajajee a commission as Soubahdar of Malwa, exacted from [illegible] chiefs a deed, by which they became

guarantees for the fidelity and allegiance of their nominal lord. This measure and many others of similar character prove that the authority of the Paishwah was only recognized as that of first officer of the state; and he seems to have consulted with other chiefs of the confederacy, on points that related to their general interest, on a footing almost of equality; but, perhaps, this extraordinary* proceeding is in some degree to be referred to the master-principle of the Mahratta [illegible] which rejected no means that could [illegible] their object.

[illegible] accounts regarding the establishment of the Mahrattas in Central India agree, that their first administration of that country was moderate and good, particularly as contrasted with those aggravated evils which are ever the concomitants of

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* The [illegible] here described is, however, not limited to the Mahrattas, but common to Hindu governments, in few of which the princes appear to have obtained any very despotic power, the shape of all being that of a feudal confederacy.

† The hereditary Zemindar of Indore gave me a very distinct account of the first settlement of the Mahrattas in Malwa, and considering the transaction as recent, the narrator's remarkable age advanced in years, and that his grandfather, Row Nund Lal, was the person who met and conducted the Mahrattas into the province, we can hardly doubt his general accuracy. The following are the exact words of his answer to a question upon the subject.

falling power, when the necessities of a sovereign lead him to oppress those whom he cannot protect. Their conduct to the inhabitants was for a period very conciliatory, and they soon established a strength that made the weak govern-

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"In the reign of Mahomed Shah, when the Moghul "Empire had fallen to pieces, and the power of the Delhi mo- "narch was rapidly declining, Dia Bahadur (a Brahmin) was "Soubahdar of Malwa. The corruptions and abuses of power "which prevailed in the remnants of the Delhi territories "were great, and the distress arising from a total neglect of "the duties incumbent upon Government fell heavily upon the "peaceful husbandman and labourer of the field, who groaned "under the oppression of every petty tyrant that chose to act "the despot. The subordinate chiefs, or Thakoors, of Malwa, "impatient of the oppressions and rapacious exactions imposed "upon them and their Ryots by Dia Bahadur or his agents, "represented their grievances to the court of Delhi, and soli- "cited redress. The reigning monarch, however, Mahomed "Shah, held the reins of government with too weak a hand, "and was too much immersed in indolent and effeminate "pleasure, to afford redress; and the Rajpoot chiefs, finding "their hopes disappointed, turned their eyes towards the "Raja of Jeypoor, Sevai Jye Singh, to whom they made "their appeal. Jye Singh was one of the most powerful and "able of those Rajas of Hindustan who still remained obe- "dient to the Emperor: his allegiance, however, had begun to "waver, in consequence, it is supposed, of an affront he had "received; and a secret intercourse was established between "him and the Paishwah Bajerow, the object of which was "believed to be the subversion of the Mahomedan power. "The Rajpoot chiefs of Malwa preferred their complaints [illegible] "he recommended them to invite the Mahrattas [illegible] "he province, and subdue the Moghul [illegible]

ment of Mahomed Shah despair of recovering a country which became the home of the invaders, from whence they carried their predatory excursions into Hindustan; and a grant of a part of the revenues of that country, not excepting the lands near Delhi, was one of the early fruits of their success.

"rity. Row Nund Lal, Choudry, or principal officer of "the district of Indore, was then a Zemindar of wealth and "consequence, and had troops amounting to 2000 horse and "foot, who were paid from the revenues he enjoyed. He had "also charge of the different posts which guarded the fords "of the Nerbudda, and he was on this latter account selected "to treat with the Mahrattas and promote the invasion. The "army of Bajerow was encamped on the plains of Ber-"hampoor, and a force of about 12,000 men under Mulhar "Row Holkar formed the advance. Row Nund Lal deputed "a Vakeel to Mulhar Row with an invitation to enter Malwa, "and an assurance of the Ghauts, or passes, being left open for "his troops, and of all the Zemindars aiding the invaders. The "Mahrattas, in consequence, marched, and crossed the Ner-"budda at a ford near Akberpoor, a village between Dhu-"rumpooree and Mhysir. Dia Bahadur, having in the "mean time received intelligence of their approach, had "moved with a force beyond Anjherra, and blocked up the "Ghauts which lead to Pandah, by which he supposed the "enemy meant to ascend to the Table Land. The Mahrattas, "however, being favoured by the Zemindars and inhabitants, "were conducted up an unguarded pass, now called the Byroo "Ghaut, a few miles to the East of Mandoo; and having "brought up their whole force on the plain without opposition, "they afterwards encountered Dia Bahadur at a village "Tirollah between Anjherra and Dhar, where

Bajerow, after overrunning Bundelcund, plundering Hindustan, and exacting a promise of the Choute, or fourth of the revenue, upon the whole of the Moghul empire, left Malwa, (six years subsequent to his entering that province,) to proceed to his Southern territories. He appears in this year to have solicited and obtained a letter and present from the Emperor, placing him in the highest rank of his nobles. This document states, that Bajerow has been exalted above his equals, by the grant of territories; that a splendid dress* is transmitted to him:—and he is reminded of his duty, and directed "to tread "firmly in the broad path of fidelity." The year before these honours were conferred, the Emperor had endeavoured to expel Bajerow from Malwa,

"defeated and slain, and his troops dispersed. From that pe-
"riod the Mahrattas obtained paramount rule in Malwa. The
"ancient Thakoors, Zemindars, &c. were allowed to retain
"their possessions, on the same terms they held them under
"the Moghul government, and guaranteed from the recurrence
"of the oppressive exactions they had lately been suffering.
"The Moghul Amildars and the public officers, with their
"Thannahs or posts, were all turned out, and replaced by those
"of the Mahrattas. Some of the Thakoors, who afterwards
"became refractory and neglected to pay their tributes and
"perform their engagements, were deprived of their possessions
"and power, which were assumed by their new masters, whose
"proceedings, however, on their first taking possession of the
"province were studiously adapted to conciliate the Hindu
"chiefs and inhabitants."

* The articles of this dress (Khelaut) are enumerated in the letter.

A.D. 1738. by the reappointment of Nizam ul Mulk to the office of Soubahdar of that province. This was probably one of the causes that led the Paishwah to proceed to the Deckan, where he, no doubt, expected, from the absence of the Nizam (who was called to Delhi to oppose Nadir Shah), to make considerable conquests. But the close of his career was marked by a memorable reverse. He suffered a signal defeat in the vicinity of Poona from Nazir Jung, the son of Nizam ul Mulk, and his capital was taken and burnt. These events preceded only a few months the death of this celebrated Mahratta chief.* He was succeeded by his son Ballajee, who went through the
A.D. 1740. mock ceremony of obtaining an investiture from the imprisoned Sahoo Raja, before he entered upon the exercise of his functions as Paishwah.

The invasion of Nadir Shah had thrown the whole of India into confusion and dismay, and Ballajee hasteued to take advantage of the opportunity, which this event afforded, of extending his power. The first authentic record we have of his reign, is a very remarkable compact with Nizam ul Mulk. It is in the form of requests and answers, a very usual shape of Indian diplomatic papers.

The first request is, that Ballajee shall be ap-

* Bajerow Ballal succeeded to the office of Paishwah in May 1720, and died in the same month, after a rule of twenty years, leaving it to his son Ballajee Bajerow.

pointed Soubahdar of Malwa*, and have the whole of that province as a Jaghire, or estate. The answer is, that the Nizam is himself Soubahdar, but, on the Paishwah promising obedience, the Sunnuds, or deeds, to be Naib, or deputy, shall be sent him.

In the next article a request is made for the fifty lacks of rupees which the Emperor had promised as an aid.† Every effort (it is stated in reply) will be made to obtain this amount.

From the tenor of the superscription‡ on this document, it must have been written when Nizam ul Mulk was passing through Malwa (after Nadir Shah had left India) to punish his rebellious son in the Deckan. A. D. 1740

During the three years that intervened from the accession of Ballajee to the office of Paishwah,

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* It has been before explained, that the greatest part of that country which we term Central India, was included in the Moghul Soubahor government of Malwa. *Vide ante*, i.

† Mudud Khurch, literally, aid of expenditure.

‡ This Persian deed is styled "Memorandum of Demands and Answers." There is upon the envelope of this document a short note in the Mahratta language—"That the enclosed "Memorandum regarded the Soubahdary of Malwa, and the "fifty lacks of rupees, was sent by Ballajee Row to the Nabob "Asoph Jah, who was then (the 26th of Ramzan, year not "mentioned) at Suraee in Malwa, and the answers to the Me- "morandum were originally in Asoph Jah's own hand- "writing."—Asoph Jah left Delhi in 1740. He fought his son Nizam u Dowlah in 1741, and he continued in the Deckan till his death, 1748. Mahomed Shah died the same year.

to the death of Jye Singh, there appears to have been a constant friendly intercourse between the latter and the Mahrattas: and several letters and engagements, which have been preserved, shew distinctly the character of this connexion, which, though perhaps originally grounded on Hindu feeling, took a different shape after the Mahrattas had entered the scene. Jye Singh's object was, to continue the medium of intercourse between them and the Emperor: but he desired, as appears from certain articles in their agreements, to combine his duty to his sovereign with his friendship to the Mahrattas. He also wished to use the latter as auxiliaries: and an engagement* of four articles is chiefly directed against Abber Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, with whom he was then in a state of hostility. But death came seasonably to release this great and accomplished prince† from a scene of intrigue, distraction, and guilt, in which, from his want of means to guide the storm that was around him, his character might have been soiled, but could not have been elevated. The last engagement he concluded with the Mahrattas, from its date, could only have been settled a short period before his death. Its first

* This offensive and defensive engagement is dated in the year of the Sumbhut 1798, and below 1141 of the Sursun, the Arabic æra used by the Mahrattas, which dates correspond with Hejira 1155 and A. D. 1741.

† He died A. D. 1743.

article is completely an offensive and defensive engagement. The second is remarkable: it supposes (probably on very good experience) the likelihood of Bajerow breaking his faith with the Emperor. Jye Singh states that he will prevent such an occurrence; but, if it happens, he will follow the Paishwah*. The third and fourth articles are general; but by the fifth he promises to pay attention to the interests of some Rajpoot chiefs to the North of the Chumbul river, whom Ballajee had recommended, and to endeavour to establish them in their possessions, on their paying the tribute, provided they were firm in their allegiance to the Emperor. This latter qualification proves, that he was still sensible to his duty in that quarter; and indeed it is probable he acted only a ministerial part, in all that related to the intercourse between Mahomed Shah and the Paishwah. In the concluding and most important article of the engagement alluded to, Jye Singh promises "to pro-"cure, in the course of six months, the Em-"peror's command for the issue of a Firmaun, or "order, in the name of the Sahoo Raja, and the "transmission of the usual presents, also the Sun-"nuds, or deeds, for the Vicegerency of the Sou-

* The literal translation from the original in the Rangree dialect is, "I will be after you;" which may be interpreted either as implying continued friendship in all extremes, or hostility on a change of conduct. The latter is, fortunately for the fame of Jye Singh, the most obvious reading.

"bah of Malwa, and the sanction to take tribute, "as established by the Emperor, from the Rajas "on this side (i. e. the North) of the Chumbul." This treaty was concluded on the fourteenth night of the Moon of Jeth, in the year of the Sumbhut 1798, corresponding with A. D. 1741. Jye Singh died the next year. Few chiefs have attained higher or more merited reputation. The city of Jeypoor, which he built to perpetuate his name, exhibits in its splendid appearance the mind of its founder. The erection of an observatory, and its endowment at his new capital, shewed that the love of science was mixed with the other virtues and qualities of this prince, who completely fulfilled, during a long reign, the extraordinary promise he gave even in childhood; but he belongs to the subject of this narration, only as a Chief who at some periods had power, and throughout his life great influence, over the whole of Central India, where his name is still fondly cherished by all, and particularly by the Rajpoots. These deem him, and Jeswunt Singh of Joudpoor, who is dear to them from his opposition to Aurungzebe, the greatest of their race.

It is impossible not to suppose, that the influence of such a character as Jye Singh operated as some restraint on Ballajee: but the contempt of all morality, in their political arrangements, was with the Mahrattas avowed, and shameless. We have a remarkable instance of this in a

to an engagement made by Ballajee with the weak sovereign of Delhi: in which, after stating various conditions of service that they bind themselves to perform, it is added, "that Ballajee Row * intended in future to do every thing candour and sincerity dictated, to obey the Emperor's wishes as appeared best to his judgment, and to refrain from the litigiousness he had formerly practised in causing unnecessary delays, &c. by pretended scruples, arising from the omission of a Firmaun, or other alleged informalities; neither would he in future endeavour to evade the performance of any duty or service by pretended want of cash, or any such groundless excuse."

The Emperor Mahomed Shah had appointed † Ballajee to be Soubahdar of Malwa; but there

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* This remarkable confession is attached to an engagement of nine articles given to the Emperor by Ballajee and his uncle Chimnajee, after the former had been nominated Soubahdar of Malwa. It is believed to be written in the Peishwah's own hand; and commences with stating that the agreement of nine articles had been made after much discussion, in the time of Khan Dowran, to please the Vizier, by advice of Row Kirpah Ram. The latter person was of some celebrity; he was long Vakeel on the part of Jye Singh at Delhi, and was a personal favourite of Mahomed Shah.

† This appointment is made by two Sunnuds, or deeds, the one dated the twenty-second of Jumad-ul-Awul, and the other the eighteenth of Rujub, in the twenty-fourth year of the Emperor's reign.

was at this period a remarkable indirectness in all proceedings betwixt the Emperor and the Paishwah;—and the high office of Soubahdar of Malwa is, by a singular form, given in trust* to the Vizier, to be bestowed upon the Paishwah. It is probable that the weak successor of Timur was ashamed of the concessions into which he was forced, and that this expedient originated in a desire to prevent his dignity being compromised by the form of the engagement. On these points the Mahratta chief was careless, and, so long as he advanced in the substance of power†, he willingly left the name of it to others. Ballajee appears

* This is the form in the second Sunnud, or deed, dated the eighteenth of Rujub.

† The great solicitude with which the Paishwah sought the title and power of Soubahdar of Malwa is proved by a variety of papers, propositions, and minor agreements, in which he is profuse of his professions of obedience and allegiance, in the event of his wishes being complied with. There is among these records a curious instance of Ballajee's readiness to subscribe any thing, and to endeavour by every means to promote his objects. In an engagement which he gave the Emperor, dated the twenty-third year of his reign, (one year before he obtained the grant of Malwa,) it is written in the preamble, "I, Ballajee Row Mookh Pordhan, through the "mediation of Asoph Jah;" and in another paper of the same purport and date, and which exactly corresponds on all other points, he not only omits the mention of this mediation, but states that he, the Paishwah, will not contract any friendship with Asoph Jah, or others, without the royal permission. It has been conjectured that the first of these records was the

from other documents, to have extorted from the court of Delhi sums of money upon the most groundless and even insulting pretexts: amongst others, a large sum which had been promised to his father, on the condition of his joining the Emperor on the invasion of Nadir, was claimed and extorted, though Bajerow had on that occasion not only kept aloof, but taken every advantage of the crisis to enlarge his possessions.

The gratitude of Ballajee, when he obtained the office of Soubahdar of Malwa, was expressed in an engagement* from him and his uncle, which

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original draft, but, not being approved by the Emperor, the other was substituted: but it is much more probable, from both having been carefully preserved among the state papers at Poona, that one engagement was forwarded to the court of Delhi, and another to Nizam ul Mulk. Such a proceeding is quite conformable with the usage of Mahratta politicians, who, if they attain the object of the moment, are insensible to the disgrace of future detection and exposure.

* The following is a translation of the articles of agreement of Pundit Purdhan Ballajee Row, and Chimnajee Row.

"As from beneficence and bounty the Soubahdary of Malwa "has been bestowed upon the servants Ballajee Row and "Chimnajee Row, we are willing to perform our service as "follows:

"1st. We wish to have the honour of enjoying the dignity of "being admitted to the august presence.

"2d. We promise that we shall not invade, plunder, or lay "waste any country except Malwa.

"3d. No other Mahratta chief shall pass beyond the

though written in a tone of submission to the Emperor, contained in its stipulations ample proof of the real condition of those, who sought the promotion of their temporary interests by unmeaning professions of allegiance and obedience.

In the anxiety of Ballajee to obtain possession of Malwa, he had recourse to the measure, which has been before noticed, of making his chief generals become the guarantees of his good faith; and the following document was given to Mahomed Shah to guard against his future encroachments: "We, Ranojee Sindia, Mulharjee Holkar,

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"Ghauts of the Nerbudda, into any part of the Soubah of "Hindustan. We take upon ourselves this responsibility.

"4th. A respectable Mahratta officer, with a body of five "hundred horse, shall always be present in the service of his "Majesty.

"5th. We accept the sum which has this year been given "us as Enam or gift; but in future we will not ask for a frac- "tion from the court, which is the centre of the world, and "shall always remain steady and firm in our duty and alle- "giance.

"6th. Whenever the victorious army shall move abroad, a "body of 4000 horse shall be furnished by us to accompany "the camp; but should more be required, their expenses "must in that case be defrayed by the enlightened presence.

"7th. We will not exact from the Zemindars [illegible] "river Chumbul, a fraction more than the estab[illegible] "kush, or tribute.

"8th. Should the enlightened presence issue [illegible] "to punish any petty Zemindars in that quarter, [illegible]

"Jeswunt Row Puar, and Pillajee Jadhoo, hereby "give it under our hands, that, Ballajee Row "Mookh Purdhan having agreed to serve his Ma- "jesty, should he hereafter desire to recede from "his duty, we shall by our representations prevent "his doing so; but if, notwithstanding our endea- "vours, he still persists in withdrawing from his "duty, we shall in that case quit the service of "the Purdhan Pundit. In token of the same we "have written the above as a deed." This docu- ment is dated the seventh of Rubee-ul-Awul, in the twenty-third of the reign, A. D. 1743.

The retrospect of a few years gives a still more singular character to this extraordinary record. Ranojee had carried the slippers of the father of the chief for whose conduct he now pledged him- self, and Mulhar Row Holkar had only a few years before been attending a flock of goats, at his native village in the Deckan; but it was a period

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"nish a quota of 4000 horse, who will exert their endea- "vours to effect the [illegible] "9th. With respect to the Jagl Killedars and the "perqu sites of Canoongoes, Muftis is also lands, pen- "sions ; and other charitable institu nanating from the "bou nty of the enlightened presence, fare that we will t infringe upon them, but allow t benefit of them those on whom they have been be that they may nploy themselves in uttering benedic his Majesty's ternal prosperity."

N. B. The note found on the envelope greement has before noticed. Vide page 91.

of revolution, and these persons were now great military commanders, who had not only armies of their own, but interests, particularly North of the Nerbudda, quite distinct from those of the Paishwah, whose history indeed, subsequent to the events here stated, has little connexion with that of Central India; to illustrate which it will be necessary to give a concise account of the Mahratta families of Puar, Sindia, and Holkar, whose ancestors were employed in the first reduction of this country, and to whom it afterwards became subject.

CHAPTER IV.

The families of the Puars of Dhar and Dewass.

In the early periods of Mahratta history, the family of Puar appears to have been one of the most distinguished.* They were of a Rajpoot tribe, numbers of which had been settled in Malwa at a remote æra; from whence this branch had migrated to the Deckan. Sevajee Puar, the first of the family that can be traced in the latter country, was a landholder†; and his grandsons Sambajee and Kalejee were military commanders, in the service of the celebrated Sevajee. Three sons of the former, Oudajee, Anund Row, and Jugdeo, served the successor of that prince (Sahoo Raja), during whose reign Oudajee attained considerable rank. He was not only intrusted with high command, but treated with great consideration, as appears by the style and purport

* This tribe has been before noticed. Vide page 23.

† He was Zemindar of Sopaut Kingee and Kurrungaum in the Deccan.

of letters and deeds from Sahoo Raja and his minister Bajerow, still in the possession of the family.

Oudajee, eight years before Bajerow conquered Central India, was employed to establish the predatory claims* of the Mahrattas over that

the Mahrattas should, by making Dhar the capital of Anund Row and his descendants, restore the sovereignty of a race who had seven centuries before been expelled from the government of that city and territory. But the present family, though of the same tribe (Puar), claim no descent * from the ancient Hindu Princes of Malwa. They have, like all the Khetri tribes who became incorporated with the Mahrattas, adopted, even in their modes of thinking, the habits of that people. The heads of the family, with feelings more suited to chiefs of that nation than Rajpoot princes, have purchased the office of Potail †, or head-man, in some villages in the Deckan; and their descendants continue to attach value to their ancient, though humble, rights of village officers in that quarter. Notwithstanding that these usages, and

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* The Rajas of the petty principality of Soonie assert their title to this proud lineage.

† I have seen this Sunnud for the office of Potail to the village of [illegible]mar, in the Pergunnah of Junneer, which was purchased for 1112 rupees and a horse by Anund Row Puar, in A. D. 1[illegible]0. The son of Anund Row, Jeswunt Row Puar, bought the half of the office of Potail of the village of Kungaon, in the Pergunnah of Kwadah, in the province of Junneer, in A. D. 1784, when Prince of Dhar; he paid 771 rupees for the purchase. These offices, which with their small immunities were occasionally disturbed in the time of the Peishwahs, have been eagerly reclaimed since the British authority was extended over the Poona territories.

the connexions they formed, have amalgamated this family with the Mahrattas, they still claim, both on account of their high birth, and being officers of the Rajas of Sattara (not of the Paishwahs), rank and precedence over the house of Sindia and Holkar; and these claims, even when their fortunes were at the lowest ebb, were always admitted as far as related to points of form and ceremony. The late Jeswunt Row Holkar and Dowlet Row Sindia were, indeed, forward to acknowledge their superior rank, at the very moment they were usurping their power and despoiling their territories.

Anund Row Puar was vested with authority to collect the Mahratta share of the revenue of Malwa and Guzerat in A. D. 1734. This commission, however, could hardly have been acted upon, as the Paishwah, Bajerow, became Soubahdar of the former province in the ensuing year, and whatever forms the policy of the Mahrattas might have led them to observe, they were substantially the sovereigns of Malwa from this date. Anund Row soon afterwards settled at Dhar, which province, with the adjoining districts, and the tributes of some neighbouring Rajpoot chiefs, were assigned for the support of himself and his adherents.

Anund Row died A. D. 1749, and was succeeded by his son Jeswunt Row Puar, who accompanied the Paishwah to Hindustan, and was

one of the many distinguished leaders* who fell in the celebrated action which the Mahrattas, commanded by Sadasheo Bhow, the Paishwah's brother, fought at Paniput, against the combined Mahomedan armies, under the Afghan sovereign

* Jeswunt Row Puar had attained high consideration amongst the Mahrattas, and is spoken of as alike remarkable for his kindness and valour by the inhabitants of Malwa, who cherish many traditions of his fame. The following anecdote of this chief was related to me by one of my most respectable Native writers, Kealee Ram, who had at one period the management of Bersiah. He said, that about thirty years ago he had a long conversation with Himmut Singh, the hereditary Choudry, or chief officer of the district, (then eighty years of age,) who praised the goodness and high spirit of Jeswunt Row Puar extremely. When the Bhow was encamped on the river near Bersiah, Himmut Singh told him that Jeswunt Row took him and some others to the tent of the commander to see what was going on. "Jeswunt Row had gone to the inner tent to "pay his respects, while I with other Zemindars (Himmut "Singh observed) sat myself down at the entrance of the outer. "Three Mahratta chiefs dismounting from their horses, and "having no horsekeepers, bade me and two others hold them "while they went into the tent of the Bhow. We did so. Jes- "wunt Row, on coming out, enquired how we came to have "such occupations: when informed of what had occurred, he "exclaimed in anger, 'Who dares degrade my Zemindars into "horsekeepers?' and then turning to us, said, 'Mount these "animals and ride them home, they are your property.' We "readily obeyed, (said Himmut Singh,) and never heard more "upon the subject, but kept our excellent horses and their fine "housings."

45737

Ahmed Shah Abdalli. Kundee Row, the son of Jeswunt Row, was a minor* when his father was slain, and the management of the family possessions fell to a Brahmin of the name of Mahdoo Row Ourekur. From this period the petty state of Dhar appears to have declined. The Mahratta chiefs in Malwa, in their turn, took advantage of the weak and distracted state of this principality; and its ruin seemed at one period inevitable, when the well-known Ragobah, who brought misfortune on all who supported him, sent his family for refuge to Dhar, which was immediately surrounded by a detachment of the combined forces of his enemies. Anundee Bhye, his principal wife, who had just been delivered of Bajerow (the last of the Paishwahs), was within the fort; and the object of the assailants was to obtain possession of her and the young prince. As Kundee Row had openly joined the standard of Ragobah, his countries in Malwa were resumed, and their restoration was the price given for the surrender of Anundee Bhye and her child†, who were carried prisoners to the Deckan. The orders in the name of Paishwah Madhoo Row, directing the restoration of the

* He was only two years and a half old.

† The infant who was so early doomed to a prison might have been pitied; but none commiserated the depraved ambitious mother, who, when the young unfortunate Paishwah Narrainee Row, flying from his murderers, was clasping in

different districts in Malwa to Kundee Row, explain specifically their tenure to be for the support* of troops: indeed, that was the only grant ever made to military chiefs, and no other appears to have been sought. It was, according to the practice of this loose state, no check to usurpation; and it gave them, when the paramount power was strong, an excuse with themselves and others for submission, which was congenial to their habits. The usage that rendered military command, as well as civil charge, hereditary, made them confident that their descendants would keep possession under this tenure, as long

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arms round his uncle and imploring life, rushed from her apartment and unknit the boy's hands, and threw him with violence from Ragobah. He met the fate to which, it is believed by almost all Mahrattas, she, from a desire to raise herself and children, was the chief cause of his being doomed. Ragobah (that name of ill omen to all, and to none more than the English), who is considered by his countrymen as being weaker than he was wicked, continued through life under the influence of this bold bad woman, of whom I never heard a Mahratta speak but with disgust and indignation.

* It was by accident I discovered the deed for this tenure, which is termed Serinjam. The Pundit of Dhar shewed some alarm; at which I smiled, and told him his master had now the best tenure in India, a treaty with the British government, and no retrospect could or would be taken to his former rights. He said he believed so, but that many stories were told of our giving a construction to the terms of grants, which, though liberal and perhaps just, was not consistent with the manner in which they were understood by Mahrattas.

as they could under any other; for they well knew, from the principles of their empire, that, when they ceased to be able to defend themselves, no titles, however valid, would save them from ruin.

Kundee Row Puar had married the daughter of Govind Row Guickwar, by whom he had one son, born six months after his death. This prince, who was called Anund Row, remained at Baroda, the capital of his grandfather, till he was seventeen years of age, when he proceeded to Dhar; and, though at first opposed by the Dewan Rung Row Ourekur, he succeeded in establishing himself in his principality.

A. D. 1797. From the date of Anund Row's return, the history of the Puars of Dhar presents one series of misfortunes; and during the last twenty years the efforts made by its princes have had less the character of a contest for power, than a struggle for existence. The Mahratta chieftains Holkar*

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* Jeswunt Row Holkar received the rebellious minister, Rung Row Ourekur, who claimed his protection, in the most friendly manner, and, while he carried on an ineffectual negotiation to reconcile him to his master, plundered and laid waste the country. The minister, however, finding that Jeswunt Row could not accomplish his views, went to the Deckan, where he succeeded in instigating Dowlet Row Sindia to attack Dhar, A. D. 1807. That prince at first demanded thirty lacks of rupees from this petty state, assuring that he had orders from the Paishwah to resume its

and Sindia were amongst its principal despoilers. Anund Row, after some vain efforts to preserve his territories, died. His power devolved on

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lands, which he threatened to enforce if this requisition was not complied with. After a great effort, two lacks of rupees were raised, which were given, with an order for four more upon the Kotah tribute; but this was only a part of the loss which the conduct of Ourékur brought upon this principality. The districts of Auggur and Soneli, which had been granted to that minister for his support, were by him made over to Sindia; and the hostilities of the latter did not stop, till he had despoiled Anund Row of the principal part of his possessions, A. D. 1805. Those in Harrowtee were all seized, and Dhar was a second time attacked by one of his leaders, Juggah Bappoo, who extorted a considerable sum from its ruler.—In two years afterwards (A. D. 1807) another of these, Sambajee Jugha, made war upon this declining principality, and took, after an action fought at Budnawur, the whole of that district, to satisfy the demand made by order of Sindia for seventy-five thousand rupees. A desire to regain his country led to this amount being raised and paid by Anund Row; but, during this transaction, that unfortunate prince died. This event, with the confusion that ensued, was made the pretext of keeping both the money and the territory. Anund Row is believed to have been poisoned by his sister, who was of a very bad and dissolute character. Her supposed object was the government, which she would have exercised in the name of some child she meant to adopt. These hopes, if ever entertained, were completely frustrated; she was seized and put to death, with several real or presumed accomplices, a few days after her brother's death.

About the period of these transactions, Meer-Khan seized on Bersiah, a district of the Puars, and made it over to ...am Khan Pindarry. Some years afterwards the P...

his widow, Meenah Bhye *. This princess was pregnant when her husband died, and, fearing the designs of Moraree Row, an illegitimate son of Jeswunt Row Puar, who had formed a party at Dhar, she went to Mandoo, where she was delivered of a son called Ramchunder Row

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or Tal and Mundawul were seized by Jeswunt Row Holkar, and granted to Guffoor Khan for the support of troops. While the territories of this state in Malwa were taken and partitioned by every description of plunderers, the Dewan who had been the chief cause of these misfortunes, after a reconciliation with Anund Row, which led him to stay at Dhar a few months, fled to Poona, where he completed the ruin of his prince, by persuading Bajerow to seize upon his possessions in the Deckan.

Rung Row Oorekur is still alive, and resident at Poona. He is represented as being an able man; and while he had the sole management of the affairs of Dhar, it was well governed. His desire was, that Anund Row should remain at Baroda with his mother; but, when the impetuosity of that prince (for, though only seventeen years of age, he is said to have acted upon the impulse of his feelings) led to his sudden appearance in his own territories, and to a rupture with the Dewan, the latter, governed by ambition, seems to have found a malignant pleasure in giving his aid to destroy the state which he could not continue to rule; and he lately made an unsuccessful attempt to defraud his prince of some small rights of inheritance in the Poona territories, which he pretended had been assigned for his support.

* Meenah Bhye was niece of Gahena Bhye, the widow of Govind Row Guickwar, a woman of considerable ability, whose influence had for many years been paramount at the Court of Baroda.

Puar. This event gave strength to her cause; and the commandant* of the fort of Dhar remaining faithful, obliged Moraree Row to have recourse to deceit. Meenah Bhye was persuaded, A.D. 1807. by his professions of obedience and attachment, to come to the capital; but, instead of being permitted to proceed to the fort, was compelled to occupy a place in the town, where she was immediately besieged by the troops of her enemy, who even attempted to burn the house† in which she and her adherents lived. But her spirit was not to be subdued. While this contest was carrying on, she exchanged her child with that of a peasant's wife, and, keeping the latter, she instructed the woman to carry the young Raja to the fort, which was effected during the night. Moraree Row, the moment he discovered what had occurred, threatened vengeance; but the exulting mother told him he might wreak his rage on her as he pleased,—she was indifferent, now the

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* Killahdar.

† I listened with pleasure when at Dhar, in December 1818, to the animated detail which Meenah Bhye gave me of those events. "Ask Bappoo Raghunauth," she said, "and others who are near you, what advice they gave me, when the house in which I lived was ready to be enveloped in flames. They intreated me to fly; but I told them I would remain where my honour required I should, and if the purpose of my enemy was accomplished, it would be a Suttee (self-sacrifice) worthy of late husband."

prince who represented the family was beyond his power. She had sent the commandant a message, imploring him to defend her son to the last, and to be heedless of her fate. Moraree Row, after an unsuccessful attempt to take the fort, fled upon hearing that a body of troops from Guzerat were hastening to the relief of Meenah Bhye. The desperate condition of the principality had led the Regent Princess to apply every where for aid. Sindia (in spite of his having been the principal despoiler) was solicited to save the legitimate heir from ruin. The British government was courted, through the Resident at Baroda, to interpose its protection. But it did not suit the convenience or policy of these states to interfere. The intreaties, danger, and spirited exertions of Meenah Bhye, at last interested her relations and friends in Guzerat so far, that a force under Succaram Chimnajee* was sent to her support.

The avowed object of this aid was to save the principality of Dhar from destruction; but it was, no doubt, in contemplation that it might eventually become a dependance of the Guickwar government, and the immediate expedition was looked to as a source of profit and strength to the individuals who had projected, and were employed

* Succaram Chimnajee was the brother of Seetaram, the minister at Baroda, who was supported in this measure by the influence of Gahena Bhye, the aunt of Meenah Bhye.

upon it. The latter speculation was completely frustrated: a load of debt was incurred without any adequate advantage. Succaram died, and his place was supplied by one of his officers, Bappoo Raghunauth, who, though he failed in realizing the hopes of the court of Baroda, succeeded by his activity and energy, supported by the confidence and animated by the courage of Meenah Bhye, in keeping this petty state alive, till those revolutions occurred which have restored it (though with reduced territories) to a condition of peace and permanent security far beyond what it had ever known.

The history of this change is short. During the last few years Meenah Bhye, aided by her Guzerat friends, carried on a petty warfare with Moraree Row for the possession of the principality, and made incursions on the territories of neighbouring Rajpoot chiefs to support her troops: for the country was rendered destitute of regular revenue, and they, like others, had no resource but plunder.

The son of Anund Row died, but his mother, sanctioned by the Hindu law, and by the concurrence of neighbouring princes *, immediately adopted her sister's son, who was of about the same age, and seated him on the Musnud, under the name of Ramchunder Puar. Moraree Row,

* Both Dowlet Row Sindia and Jeswunt Row Holkar concurred in this adoption.

after several vicissitudes, was ultimately compelled to leave the country, and soon after died. The district of Kookseé was wrested from Dhar by the Mukranee chief Muzuffer, who, having settled with a body of his countrymen in the strong country of Ally Mohun, situated between Guzerat and Dhar, had made himself formidable to the latter, and several other petty states, on the plunder of which he in fact subsisted. The Guzerat troops of Seetaram almost all retired to that province. Detachments of Sindia's entered the Dhar territories to levy contributions; and within the last five years it has been subject to frequent predatory attacks from the Pindarries, and the different leaders of Holkar's army.

A.D. 1817. At the commencement of the year in which the British troops entered Malwa, Dhar was the only possession that remained to Ramchunder Puar, and the whole revenues of the principality did not amount to more than thirty-five thousand rupees; but, while Meenah Bhye and her adopted son lived in the fortress, Bappoo Raghunanth, with a rabble of an army, amounting to eight or nine thousand men, plundered the country, and levied contributions from Doongurpoor to Nemaur. The advance of the British armies afforded advantages which were not neglected. Dowlet Row Sindia was opportunely reminded of the gross injustice of his keeping the district of Budnawur, after the money it had been pled

fine was paid. His aid to recover Bersiah from the Pindarry chief Kurreem was also solicited; and it was intimated, that should he refuse compliance, the Puar prince must seek justice from the British government, now the arbiters of India. The court of Gwalior was not at that moment willing such a reference should be made. Pudnawur was given back, and a promise made by Sindia's government to use its influence in effecting the recovery of Bersiah. But the latter district, from its being occupied by Pindarries, fell an early conquest to the English arms. It was, however, granted to the family of Dhar, to whom the protection of the British government has been extended, in a manner which has already restored their distracted and wasted country to a condition of order and tranquillity.

The revenues of the petty state of Dhar will be hereafter noticed.

Raja Ramchunder Puar is a fine boy, twelve years of age. The regent Meenah Bhye, who is still young in years, though old in the vicissitudes of life, entertains the most lively gratitude towards the English government; and Bappoo Raghunauth, the minister of Dhar, is now displaying as much zeal and energy in promoting cultivation and tranquillity, as he did two years ago in plundering the country, and disturbing the general peace. When this active and intelligent man was upbraided with his former practices, and asked how he could

assemble and maintain an army of eight thousand men, without the means of paying eight hundred, his answer* was prompt; "Can you contemplate "what has occurred, and blame the foresight that "succeeded, by keeping up the contest on any "terms, in preserving the title to a principality? "With respect to our being plunderers," he added, "there was no other class in Malwa. The course "pursued was the only one left to protract the "existence of this petty state; and we were from "year to year in hopes that the extremity of mi- "sery to which the country was reduced would "cause some great change. That has now oc- "curred; and you will judge by the future, whe- "ther we are worthy of better fortune than we "before enjoyed."

The Puars of Dewass, though their possessions are very limited, merit a short mention as chiefs of rank, and also from the singular construction of their power. The country they still enjoy was originally granted to two brothers, and has continued for more than a century in equal shares of both authority and revenue to their descendants.

It has been before stated, that Sevajee Puar had two grandsons, Sambajee and Kalojee.† The

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* The answer from Bappoo Raghunauth is taken from my notes of the first conference I had with him.

† The Puars of Dewass have given me an account of the family, by which Kalojee is stated to be the elder brother.

former, as has been related, was ancestor to the princes of Dhar. Kalejee's two sons, Tukajee and Jewajee, came with Bajerow into Malwa; and in the subsequent division of that province, they obtained possession of several districts.* This family subsequently received a grant of a district in Bundelcund†, and one in Hindustan‡. These two latter possessions they have lost; but the remainder have continued (though often overrun, and at times usurped, by other powers) in the family. Though their name always obtained them some respect from their more powerful Mahratta neighbours, the Puars of Dewass have suffered, throughout the last thirty years, the extreme of misery. They have been, in fact, the sport of every change. With territories situated in the most distracted part of Central India, and unable to maintain any force, they have alternately been plundered and oppressed, not only by the governments of Sindia and Holkar, but by the Pindaree chiefs, and indeed every freebooter of the day. A detail of their history during the last twenty-five years leaves an impression of wonder at their being in existence, or having an inhabited village in their country. But all

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* The districts first ceded to the sons of Kalejee were Dewass, Suraugpoor, and Allote, in Malwa.

† Hummeerpour. ‡ Kundelah.

that belonged to them in Malwa is now restored*, and their petty principality (under the protection of the British government, which has concluded a treaty with them,) is rising into prosperity, and promises at an early period a larger revenue than they have ever yet enjoyed.

The first chiefs of Dewass had a quarrel, which led to a division of lands and villages: but the original union of power and authority has been revived in their descendants. Tukajee, the elder of the present Rajas, is the grandson of Tukajee, one of the first possessors; while Anund Row, his cousin, is the adopted son of the grandson of Jewajee. They are equal in rank and pretensions, and share equally in all receipts. An inquiry was made into their exact relations, to ascertain how they were to be treated in points of form and ceremony. It was explained by one of their officers saying with a smile, "If a lime is presented by a villager, it must be cut into equal "parts and divided between our two Rajas." It was early found, that, though their chiefs were personally on good terms, their principal servants often came in collision; and in making arrange-

* Sarungpoor, which had been seized by Sindia, was restored to the Pears of Dewass at the conclusion of the Pindarry war. Their other possessions in Malwa, though desolated, had not been alienated.

ments for their future welfare, a primary object was to induce them to appoint one minister. To this they agreed*; and the nomination of a respectable old servant of the family to this office, has tended greatly to the improvement of their territories.

* The arrangement was facilitated by the hereditary minister of one of these Rajas being a minor.

CHAPTER V.

Family of Sindia.

THE family of Sindia are Sudras of the tribe of Koombee, or cultivators. Ranojee Sindia, the first who became eminent as a soldier, had succeeded to his hereditary office of head man, or Potail, of Kunerkerrah in the district of Wye, before he was taken into the service of the Paishwah Ballajee Bishwanath, after whose death he continued in that of his son Bajerow Belall. The humble employment of Ranojee was to carry the Paishwah's slippers; but being near the person of the chief minister of an empire in any capacity, is deemed an honour in India. The frequent instances of rapid rise from the lowest to the highest rank led men of respectability to seek such stations; and it is probable that ambition, not indigence, influenced the principal officer of a village to become, in the first instance, the menial servant of Ballajee Bishwanath. Ranojee's advancement, however, is imputed to accident. It is stated *,

* This anecdote receives confirmation from a letter of Captain Stewart, Acting Resident at Sindia's court, dated

that Bajerow, on coming out from a long audience with the Sahoo Raja, found Ranojee asleep on his back, with the slippers of his master clasped with fixed hands to his breast. This extreme care of so trifling a charge struck Bajerow forcibly: he expressed his satisfaction, and, actuated by motives common to men in the enjoyment of such power, he immediately appointed Ranojee to a station in the Pagah, or body-guard. From this period his rise was rapid: and we find him, when Bajerow came into Malwa, in the first rank of Mahratta chiefs, subscribing a bond of security to the Emperor Mahomed Shah for the good conduct of his master. Ranojee appears to have been a very enterprising active soldier. His expenses went far beyond his means: and he was indebted for considerable pecuniary aid to Mulhar Row Holkar, with whom he formed an intimate connexion. He died in Malwa, and was interred near Shujahalpoor, at a small village called from him Ranagunge.

Ranojee Sindia had been married in the Deckan to a woman* of his own tribe, by whom he had three sons, Jyepah, Duttajee, and Jut-

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September, 1819: "Ranojee (he observes) is stated, after he "was promoted, to have carried with him carefully packed in "a box, a pair of the Paishwah's old slippers, which he never "ceased to regard with almost religious veneration as the "source of his rise."

* Her name was Meenah Bhye.

tobah; the two eldest of whom became distinguished commanders.*

He had also two sons by a Rajpoot woman, a native of Malwa, Tukajee and Madhajee Sindia; the latter of whom became the head† of the family. His character early developed itself; and his rise to a station, to which he had no right from birth, does not appear to have been disputed. This chief was present at the battle of Panipat. He fled from the disastrous field, but was pursued to a great distance by an Afghan, who, on reaching him, gave him so severe a cut on the knee with a battle-axe, that he was deprived for life of the use of his right leg. His enemy, content with inflicting this wound, and stripping him of some ornaments and his mare, left him to his fate. He was first discovered by a water-carrier, of

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* Jyepah, who had been employed upon the earliest expeditions to Malwa, was, after many vicissitudes of fortune, massacred at Nagpoor by two Rhattore Rajpoots, employed by Bajee Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, against whom he was advancing at the head of a large force. Duttajee, who had accompanied Raghoonath Row in his conquests as far North as Lahore, was defeated and slain on the plain of Kunher, near Delhi. Juttobah, the younger brother, died at Kamber, near Deeg in Hindustan.

† Junkajee, the son of Jyepah, succeeded to be the head of the family on the death of Ranojee, but he was slain at Panipat almost immediately after his accession to power.

the name of Ranah Khan*, who was among the fugitives: this man, placing him upon his bullock, carried him towards the Deckan. Madhajee used frequently to recount the particulars of this pursuit. His fine Deckany mare carried him a great way ahead of the strong ambling animal upon which the soldier who had marked him for his prey was mounted: but, whenever he rested for an interval, however short, his enemy appeared keeping the same pace; at last, his fatigued mare fell into a ditch. He was taken, wounded, spit upon, and left. He used to say to the British Resident at his Court, the late General Palmer, that the circumstance had made so strong an impression upon his imagination, that he could not for a long time sleep without seeing the Afghan and his clumsy charger pacing after him and his fine Deckany mare!

The survivors of the Malwattas fled from the field of Paniput to the Deckan, and for a period the nation seemed stunned with the effects of that dreadful day†; but the return of Ahmed Shah

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* His service was gratefully rewarded. Ranah Khan, the water-carrier, was afterwards styled the Bhaee, or brother, of Madhajee Sindia, raised to the first commands in his army, and afterwards loaded with favours. His grandson (a weak young man) still enjoys some of the Jaghires that were granted to his ancestor.

† Few actions have been attended with greater carnage, lowest at which the loss of the Mahratta army is estimated

Abdalli to Cabul, and the contests among the Mahomedan nobles for the different provinces of the dissevered empire, enabled them to reoccupy Central India, and again overspread Hindustan.

The family of Sindia, with that of other Mahratta chiefs, had lost by the battle of Paniput their possessions in Hindustan and Malwa. Madhajee Sindia, however, independently of his being the most distinguished leader of the household horse* of Ballajee, who had succeeded his father Bajerow in the imperial office of Paishwah, had entertained a large military establishment of his own; and the death of Mulhar Row, the founder of the family of Holkar, which took place three years after the defeat of Paniput, made him the first in power of the Mahratta military chiefs. His behaviour on the occurrence of Mulhar Row's death was generous towards the family. When Ragobah, the uncle of the Paishwah†, desired to coerce Alia Bhye, the widow of Mulhar Row's son, and the representative of the family, into an arrangement that would have destroyed its power,

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is more than two hundred thousand men, half of whom were slain; and the moral effect was still greater. The armies of the nation had collected for the struggle, and defeat was for a moment felt as the annihilation of their power.

* Pegah.

† Madhoo Row, son of Ballajee.

Madhajee*, though he offered his personal service as belonging to the household troops of the Paishwah, refused to command the army which he had collected independently of that prince, to act against the family of so distinguished a leader. His example was followed by Jannojee Bhonslah of Nagpoor, and the designs of Ragobah were frustrated.

The Mahrattas having, three years after the battle of Paniput, collected an army of considerable force†, marched into Hindustan, under Visajee Krishna‡, who commanded on the part of the Paishwah, and received a nominal obedience from Madhajee Sindia. But that chief had now commenced his own plans for forming a separate, if not independent sovereignty. He had succeeded to all those assignments of lands made to his father to pay the troops of the family; and both in Central India and Hindustan, Raja after Raja was laid under contribution, and district after district added to the territory he governed, in the name A.D. 1764.

* It may be doubted whether this conduct was altogether gratuitous. Alia Bhye had come into the possession of a full treasury, and there is reason to believe she used some of its contents, with other means, to gain the friendship of Madhajee Sindia and the Bhonslah on this emergency.

† This expedition was directed against Nujeeb ud Dowlah, who had succeeded to the management of affairs at Delhi, which he conducted in the name of the weak Shah Allum.

‡ Visajee Krishna was long Beenee Wallah, or quarter-master-general of the Mahratta armies.

of the Paishwah; and although the share of the latter in these possessions was only nominal, his commands were made the pretext of exactions and conquests, from which his own territories were not exempt; for Madhajee Sindia took full advantage of the dissensions that occurred at Poona after the death of Bálajee, to usurp, as far as he could, the rights and lands of the head of the empire to the North of the Nerbudda. The detail of the progress of this system of spoliation of both friend and foe is not necessary: suffice it to say, this able chief was the principal opposer of the English in the war they carried on in favour of Ragobah. He was the nominal slave, but the rigid master, of the unfortunate Shah Alhum, Emperor of Delhi; the pretended friend, but the designing rival, of the house of Holkar; the professed inferior in all matters of form, but the real superior and oppressor, of the Rajpoot princes of Central India; and the proclaimed soldier, but the actual plunderer, of the family of the Paishwah.

Although by the treaty of Salbye, Sindia was recognized, as far as related to the British government, an independent prince, he continued to observe, on all other points which referred to his connexion with the Poona government, the most scrupulous attention to forms.* When he became

* Madhajee Sindia originally transacted all affairs in the name of the Paishwah, and not only his ministers, but all

master [illegible] his capital, he made the [illegible] commission appointing [illegible]* of the empire, and [illegible] the Mahratta state [illegible] at high office; but when [illegible] ing the rule of the second [illegible] was exhibited, which stands [illegible] the mummery to which [illegible] and ambitious leaders [illegible] world. The actual sovereignty [illegible] Sutlej to Agra, the conquest [illegible] Rajpootana, the command [illegible] of sixteen battalions of regular [illegible] dred pieces of cannon, and one [illegible] se, the possessor of two thirds [illegible] of the finest provinces in the [illegible] to pay his respects to a you[illegible]

public servants, even to his Choobdars [illegible] called the Paishwah's; but during the [illegible] hoo Row, when Nana Furnavese was [illegible] possessions South of the Chumbul were [illegible] rect authority. In the conquests made N[illegible] the Paishwah's name was used, and two [illegible] Poona attended Madhajee to guard the [illegible] of the empire. On first entering Hindustan [illegible] made in the Paishwah's name; but when the [illegible] nated Vakeel ul Mootlik at Delhi, these were [illegible] regular Sunnuds given in the name of the Emperor [illegible] of the Paishwah as Minister, and of Madhajee as [illegible]

* Vakeel ul Mootlik.

office of Paishwah, dismounted from his elephant at the gates of Poona; placed himself in the great hall of audience below all the Mankarries, or hereditary nobles of the state; and when the Paishwah came into the room, and desired him to be seated with others, he objected on the ground of being unworthy of the honour, and, untying a bundle that he carried under his arm, produced a pair of slippers, which he placed before Madhoojee, saying, "This is my "occupation, it was that of my father." Madhajee, at the moment he said this, took the old slippers* the Paishwah had in use, which he wrapped up carefully, and continued to hold them under his arm; after which, though with apparent reluctance, he allowed himself to be prevailed upon to sit down. This was not the only instance in which Madhajee Sindia professed to feel pride, instead of shame, at the recollection of the origin of his family, as well as of its first occupations. He had added to their property as Mahratta Ryots in the Deckan, by some purchases, and he desired to be called by the title he derived from his humble inheritance. The feeling was national, and made him popular; but he had, no doubt, other motives: these indeed are described in a common saying in India, "that Mad-

* These old slippers, Captain Stewart was informed, were carefully preserved by the successor of Madhajee Sindia.

"hajee Sindia made himself the sovereign of an "empire, by calling himself a Potail, or head man "of a village." But, though we may smile at a conduct which appeared an endeavour to reconcile stations and duties that were incompatible, it must be confessed, that this able chief was throughout his life consistent in the part he acted; which appeared more natural, from the manly simplicity of character which led him equally to despise the trappings of state and the allurements of luxury. His actions were suited to the constitution of the society he was born in, which had a just pride in his talent and energy, and esteemed him one of the ablest, as he was the most successful, of Mahratta leaders. Though Madhajee, following the example of the first statesmen of his nation, was content with the substance of power, and left others to wear its robes, there are strong grounds to conclude, that at one time he cherished the intention of giving to his vast possessions a more compact and permanent form. But this plan, if he ever entertained it, was frustrated. His career (which was one of constant action) was marked by many acts of violence and oppression; but he was, nevertheless a man of a mild disposition, and particularly desirous of improving the countries he had conquered or usurped. His ambition was, however, restless; and, tempted on one hand by the dissolution of the Moghul empire, and on the other by the weakness distraction of the chiefs of his own nation, he

extended his territories and influence too widely, and too rapidly, to admit of their being well managed.

Madhajee Sindia continued through life to retain many Mahrattas in his service; but, as he was, during the greater part of it, engaged in wars to the North of the Nerbudda, these were soon outnumbered by Rajpoots and Mahomedans. This was, though unmarked at the moment, a serious departure from the first principles of the Mahratta confederacy; and the habits of that nation were thus given to a population acting from a different impulse, and with few congenial feelings. But the policy of Madhajee carried the change a step farther. His genius saw, that, to realize his plans, the mere predatory hordes of the Mahrattas could never prove adequate. It was a circle of plunder; and, as one country was exhausted, the army had to march, with numbers increased by those whose condition their success had made desperate, to ravage another. They had, in their first excursions, little or no means of reducing forts; nor did their system of war admit of protracted hostilities in a difficult country, and against a resolute enemy. These wants were early discovered by their enemies. The Bheels from their mountains, and the Rajpoots and others from their strong holds (which were multiplied by fortifying every village), not only resisted, but retorted upon the Mahrattas.

laying waste their lands, the wrongs they had suffered. This evil was only to be remedied by a regular force. We are distinctly informed, that its existence led Madhajee Sindia to determine upon the measure he now adopted, of raising some corps of infantry; and accident gave him the aid of a man of no ordinary description. De Boigne, who entered his service at this period, is said to have been brought by chance to the notice of Madhajee, who discovered in the author of a plan to frustrate his operations against Gohud, that military genius, which was afterwards to raise him to a greater, if not a more consolidated* power, than any Indian prince had attained since the death of Aurungzebe.

Madhajee, accompanied by the brigades, or Campoos, as they were termed, of De Boigne, took forts and fought pitched battles, in a manner that the Mahrattas never before attempted. Not merely the petty disturbers of the peace of Hindustan and Central India were attacked and subdued, but the proud spirit of the higher Rajpoot states was

* His regular troops were increased from two battalions to eight, and afterwards to sixteen, with eighty pieces of artillery and a corps of well-appointed cavalry. The pay and equipments of this army were liberally fixed, and the successive proofs which they gave of their superiority led to arrangements, which made this body of men for a long period more efficient than any one of a similar nature that had ever been formed by a native prince in India.

completely broken. The battle of Meirtah, which was fought against the collected* force of Joudpoor, was a great triumph, and fixed the ascendancy† of Madhajee over that principality and the neighbouring weak state of Odeypoor, the prince of which had twenty years before been compelled to make over some of his most fertile possessions‡ to the families of Sindia and Holkar. Soon after the battle of Meirtah, De Boigne fought an action with the troops of Jeypoor. To these victories were added the defeat of Junkajee Holkar, and the destruction of four corps of regular in-
A. D. 1792. fantry under a French§ officer in the service of that chief. Before this last action took place, Madhajee Sindia had left Malwa, and arrived at Poona, where he died in A. D. 1794.

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* Two thousand horse of the tribe of Chundawut, of the Marwar army, made the only effort on this memorable day. They actually cut through De Boigne's corps, but were, when rallying to return, almost destroyed by grape. A. D. 1790.

† Beeja Singh, who was ruler of Marwar when the battle of Meirtah was fought, was the same prince who had directed the murder of Jyepah Sindia; and independent of the tribute now exacted, a cession of the district of Ajmeer was demanded and made as the price of the blood of that leader.

‡ In A. D. 1771, Jowud, Neemutch, Ruttenghur, Khonee, and Byjnoor, were made over to Madhajee Sindia. Bampoorah, Rampoorah, Mulhargbur, and the Pertaubghur tribute were given to the government of Holkar. The amount of these cessions is computed at seventy-five lacks of rupees.

§ Monsieur Dudernaic, commander of this corps, escaped; but every other European officer was either killed or wounded.

The great object of Madhajee Sindia was to give a more permanent shape to his government than had ever belonged to that of a Mahratta chief. He generally resided in Hindustan, but sometimes came to Malwa, and remained for a short time at Oojein. The countries under his own observation were well managed, as were all those where the inhabitants were peaceable and obedient: but in his efforts to reduce the chiefs of Hindustan, the princes of Rajpootana, and the petty Rajas of Central India, to the state of subjects, he let loose all the irregular violence of his army; and the proceedings of some of those he employed * to complete the subjugation of the Rajpoots, were marked by a spirit of rapacity and oppression, that has, perhaps, never been surpassed even in the annals of the Mahrattas.

Madhajee Sindia had been the enemy of the British; but he was not insensible to the benefit he derived from that nation's acknowledging him as an independent prince, which was done by the terms of the treaty † of Salbye, and by keeping a

* Ambajee Ingliah, who was one of Sindia's principal officers employed in Rajpootana, though he oppressed the princes and chiefs of that country, was kind and considerate to the inhabitants. It was on his departure that the scene of devastation commenced.

† This treaty, which was negotiated by Mr. David Anderson, has been often alluded to as furnishing an extraordinary proof of the "Anomalous Government of the

resident at his court. These circumstances, however, could not make him indifferent to the rapid growth of a foreign power; and it is probable that the materials he collected for empire were formed into the shape he gave them, with a hope that they might one day prove sufficient to arrest its progress. He refused to become a party to the treaty of Poona; and he arrived at that city, when Lord Cornwallis was before Seringapatam*, with (it was conjectured) no friendly feeling to the British nation. Whatever were his designs as relating to the English, he did not

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"Mahrattas, from Sindia, a military chief subordinate to the "Paishwah, becoming guarantee for the latter's conduct." But at this period the actual condition of the state warranted the assumption of Madhajee. The infant Paishwah was in the hands of a Dewan, Nana Furnavese, who was, like Sindia, a functionary of the state. It was in fact a guarantee, by the leading military chief of the Mahratta empire, of the conduct of one of the principal officers, and done with the latter's advice and concurrence; and, after all, Madhajee Sindia had the precedent of his father, who was one of the four principal chiefs who became in A. D. 1743 guarantee to the Emperor Mahomed Shah, that the Paishwah Ballajee, then in the plenitude of power, should not infringe the engagement into which he had entered with the sovereign of Delhi.

* Madhajee Sindia had a short time before proposed to become a party in the confederacy against Tippoo, on condition that the British government would grant two battalions to accompany him to Poona; "engage to defend his pos- "sessions in Hindustan, and aid him in his wars with the "Rajpoot states." This proposition was rejected.

live to carry them into execution; and his great power devolved, before it was well consolidated, upon a successor little equal, from his extreme youth, to complete the arduous task he inherited.

Madhajee Sindia had no sons; his brother Tukajee had three*, of whom the eldest died without issue; the second had two; the youngest, Anund Row, became the favourite of his uncle, who, in consequence of his affection to him, adopted his son, Dowlet Row Sindia, as his heir. This prince was only thirteen years of age when his grand uncle died, and left him not only his vast possessions, but an army which rendered him the arbiter of the Mahratta empire. The succession of Dowlet Row was disputed by the widows of Madhajee, who proclaimed another prince, and, having assembled an army, did not give up the contest till they had been defeated in several actions. The territories of the Sindia family in Central India, which were at the death of Madhajee Sindia nearly the same as at present, were comparatively a small portion of the dominions inherited by Dowlet Row, the foundation of whose power was laid in Hindustan. The greatest part of his regular army subsisted on the revenues of that country, and upon the tributes which its discipline and efficiency enabled it to collect from the princes of Rajpootana.

* Kebanjee, Jotecba, and Anund Row.

The government of Holkar, which had declined from the death of its founder Mulhar Row, had been expelled from all share in the territories North of Jeypoor. Its title to the tribute of that country, however, was still recognized; but this, as well as the preservation of its possessions in Malwa, was owing, in the latter years of Madhajee Sindia, less to any power the Holkar family possessed of maintaining its rights, than to the ties which still subsisted between Mahratta chiefs, and which were not forgotten, even in the hour of battle. This national feeling gave a peculiar feature to their occasional contests with each other, which frequently terminated in a way that was unintelligible to those who did not understand the character and construction of the confederacy. The value of this disposition to reunion, when apparently in the most broken and divided state, had been fully appreciated by Madhajee Sindia; and he maintained, sometimes by great sacrifices, all those bonds and relations upon which it depended. When in the plenitude of power, he did not deny the justice, though he evaded, by a counter-statement of expenses, the payment of the large demands made upon him by Nana Furnavese, for the Paishwah's share of the revenues of Malwa and Hindustan, and of the tributes he had collected. He is said to have discharged part of a large debt his father owed to the house of Holkar; and when a dispute about their respective shares of the tri-

butes led to his troops attacking those of Tukajee at Lakheree, no advantage was taken of the latter's defeat, beyond the favourable settlement of the point in dispute, and we find Madhajee immediately afterwards in the most amicable and intimate intercourse with this chief. But sentiments and conduct such as have been described could not be expected in his successor. Born and educated at a distance from the Deckan, surrounded by Europeans, Mahomedans, and Rajpoots, and despising, when contrasted with his disciplined bands, the irregular and predatory hordes, whose activity and enterprise had established the fame of his ancestors, Dowlet Row Sindia was, and considered himself, more the principal sovereign of India, than a member of the Mahratta confederacy. Some national feelings were still cherished by the high hereditary officers of his government; but their attachment to the former usages and rules of the empire was unequal to resist the growing influence of the Rajpoot and Patan soldiers, who constituted the bulk of his army, and whose commanders were among the first rank of his counsellors.

During the life of Madhajee Sindia, though intrigues were in progress among the different Mahratta chiefs for the management of the affairs of the Paishwah, whose power had for a long period, like that of the Sahoo Rajas, become nominal, no open rupture took place, and the peace of the country was preserved. The war

undertaken against the Nizam promised to their united efforts so easy and rich a booty, that it proved, for the few months it continued, a bond of union; but this short campaign soon terminated
A. D. 1795. in a convention, by which the Nizam, in alarm for his person and family, purchased safety at an enormous sacrifice of territory and treasure. This great success was immediately followed by a scene of intrigue, art, and treachery, which is, perhaps, unparalleled. The principal of those events which may be enumerated as its causes and consequences, were, the unfortunate fate of the young Paishwah Madhoo Row*, the death of Tukajee Holkar, the imprisonment of Nana Furnavese, the murder of Purseram Bhow, and the release of Azim ul Omrah, prime minister of the Nizam, who had been given as an hostage for the performance of his master's engagements. During the contests that ensued between the different chiefs, the Poona territories were laid waste, and all the miseries which the predatory bands of the Mahrattas had inflicted upon other countries, were now retaliated by the inhabitants of Central India and Hindustan; for of such (as has been before stated) the armies of both Holkar and Sindia were almost entirely composed. The youth of Dowlet Row Sindia has been stated

* He fell, or threw himself, from a high wall of his palace, and was killed on the spot.

as an excuse for his early abuse of power; but his unfortunate marriage with the daughter of Sirjee Row Ghatkia (which happened at this period), by placing that designing and wicked man at the head of his councils, was, perhaps, the chief cause of the shameless and bold rapacity which marked the commencement of his reign. The seizure of Nana Furnavese in violation of the most sacred pledges, the murder of several Brahmins (among whom was the brother of Nana), the plunder* of the inhabitants of Poona and the principal places in its vicinity, the giving his aid to Casi Row Holkar to slay his brother Mulhar Row, and the confinement of Kundy Row, the infant son of the latter chief, were among the crimes of this prince before he left the Deckan. When he returned to Malwa, whither he was summoned by alarm at the growing power of Jeswunt Row Holkar, his conduct on every occasion shewed that his views of aggrandisement were unchecked by any of the scruples that had restrained his predecessor. He accepted, as has been stated, from the rebellious minister of Dhar, two provinces of the Puar princes; the whole of the Dewass territory was seized, and only restored on the payment of a fine.

* One of the chief pretexts was the expenses of Sindia's marriage with Baizee Bhye, the daughter of Sirjee Row Ghatkia.

Jeswunt Row Holkar had, before Dowlet Row Sindia reached Malwa, made himself master of Oojein, but was satisfied with exacting a large amount from its wealthy inhabitants, and he forbade its being plundered. But Sirjee Row Ghatkia, who commanded a force which a few months afterwards defeated Jeswunt Row, and took possession of Indore, sacked that city in the most merciless manner, and ordered its best houses to be burnt, after he had either murdered or pillaged of their property the greater part of its inhabitants. This profligate chief was well aided in the work of destruction by his friends the Pindarries, numbers of whom were at this period attached to Sindia's army. The district of Indore, and several others belonging to the Holkar family, were, on this occasion, placed under the management of Sindia's officers, without any form being observed, either of resuming them in the name of the Paishwah, or of declaring the possession temporary, till the succession to the Holkar territory was settled. This was considered so offensive a departure from usage, that it united the adherents of the house of Holkar; for even those who were hostile to the character and pretensions of Jeswunt Row, saw nothing but the complete ruin of the family in the success of Dowlet Row Sindia.

The period of trouble*, as it is emphatically

* "Gurdee ka Wukht," or "the period of trouble," is the

called, had now commenced in Central India; but the tide of intrigue and war was again turned to the Deckan. Jeswunt Row Holkar marched towards Poona, with the professed design of making the Paishwah, Bajerow, arbiter of the difference between the families of Holkar and Sindia. This movement compelled Sindia to leave Malwa. He first went to Boorhanpoor, from whence he sent a detachment to join Bajerow, and to maintain his preponderance in the councils of that prince. The arrival of Sindia's troops at Poona put an end to Jeswunt Row's hopes (if he ever entertained any) from the Paishwah: and his fear of being hemmed in between two armies, if Sindia advanced, led him to instant hostilities. A.D. 1802. The victory obtained by Holkar, his alliance with Amrut Row, the flight of Bajerow, the treaty of Bassein, the interference of the British government, its war with the Mahratta leaders, Dowlet Row Sindia and Ragojee Bhonslah, are events that do not belong to this memoir. Suffice it to say, that Dowlet Row Sindia, after a vain trial of his strength against the British arms, had all his dreams of glory and ambition dispelled. The brigades* formed by De Boigne,

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name given to the period from 1800 to 1818; that is, from the first appearance of Jeswunt Row Holkar, as the supporter of his family against Dowlet Row Sindia, till the destruction of the Pindarries. A.D. 1818.

* The regular infantry brigades in the army of Dowlet Row

and completed by Perron, were destroyed; above five hundred guns, cast in the arsenals which scientific Europeans had established in his dominions, were taken; and he was compelled to purchase peace by the sacrifice of his finest possessions in Guzerat, Hindustan, and Bundelcund. This prince had still a large territory, and, however little his conduct merited it, the doubtful articles of the treaty of Sirjee Anjengaum were favourably interpreted; and he gained by another engagement, concluded two years afterwards, a considerable addition to his dominions.*

Subsequently to his making peace with the British government, the troops of Dowlet Row Sindia were constantly employed in reducing the numerous Rajas of Central India, and adjoining countries, who owed him allegiance or tribute. He was in general successful; many chiefs were coerced into complete submission, while others were destroyed: but the result of this warfare was to feed and excite that predatory and turbulent spirit, which now pervaded this unhappy country. The miseries which it had suffered

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Sindia, at the commencement of the war, consisted of seventy-two battalions, amounting, in the aggregate number of armed men, to forty-three thousand six hundred and fifty, with a large proportion of field artillery.

* The territories of Gohud, and the fort of Gwalior, were given up by the treaty of peace concluded at Muttra, in 1805.

from Pindarries and Rajpoot plunderers soon appeared as a light evil, to what it was destined to sustain from the regular brigades, or Campoos, of its principal Rulers. Those of Sindia levied contributions indiscriminately on all the towns and villages through which they passed: and the constant state of mutiny these corps were in, from want of pay, made their oppression of the inhabitants more indiscriminate and insufferable.

The causes which made Dowlet Row Sindia so instrumental in dissolving the ties by which the chiefs who constituted the loose confederacy of the Mahratta nation were bound, have been stated. He afterwards attempted, in vain, to arrest the progress of British power by an union with Ragojee Bhonslah and Jeswunt Row Holkar. The feelings which had once supported such combinations no longer existed in any force. Bajerow, however, made a last effort to revive them; and there is ground to suppose that he succeeded to a very considerable extent. Dowlet Row Sindia could not but be secretly hostile to a power, by which he had been so humbled as by the British; and he saw with satisfaction the increasing embarrassments of the war that nation was carrying on in Nepaul. But though his intrigues in that quarter, when discovered, were passed over with a generosity that must have made a strong impression, still he was not able to resist the call

of the Paishwah, to whom there can be no doubt
A.D. 1818. he promised support when that Prince determined on hostilities with the British. But Sindia acted upon this occasion more from the recollection than the existence of ties, and from a sense of distant, not proximate, danger; and such motives were not of sufficient strength to make a chief like him engage in a war, which, from the measures adopted to prevent his precipitating that step, must have commenced with the hazard of his sovereignty. He preferred the path of safety; and entered into an alliance, by which he engaged to combine his efforts with those of the British government in suppressing the predatory system, and restoring the general tranquillity of the country. That this was an act of necessity, not choice, there can be no doubt; and it has been since proved, that he secretly endeavoured to evade the performance of some of the engagements into which he had entered. But his situation was painful and difficult, and he was only able to preserve his dominions by a departure from all that is deemed honour* by the tribe to which he belongs.

* The following is the literal translation of a letter from Bajerow to Dowlet Row Sindia, given to me in April 1818, with an assurance of its being a true copy of the original. It purported to be taken from an Ackbar, or paper of intelligence. "Your father Madhajee Sindia, agreeably to the orders of "the Sircar, went to Delhi, was made a Vizier, and acquired a "high reputation. He served us with his heart and soul. When

He merited on this account the indulgence and consideration with which he has been treated, and its effects have not been lost. Dowlet Row Sindia, who is personally of a good disposition, and is now free from the counsellors who betrayed and corrupted his youth, sees in their true light the motives that have actuated the British government. He appears already to have submitted to the great revolution that has occurred; and, viewing the struggle for superiority as past, is forward to recognize the paramount sway of the British A.D. 1802. government, and to benefit by its action being directed to the restoration and maintenance of internal tranquillity.

"you became his successor, you entered into alliance with "the English: thus you govern in Hindustan, and thus you "shew your gratitude. In thus serving us, it is befitting "you to put bangles on your arms, and sit down like a "woman. After my power is destroyed, is it possible that "yours should stand?"

Dowlet Row, the writer of this article adds, after having heard the above, remained in much distress during two hours, and then went to sleep: he sent no answer.

CHAPTER VI.

Family of Holkar.

THE family of Holkar are of the Dhoongur * or shepherd tribe. The first who obtained any eminence, or indeed rose above the class of peasants in which he was born, was Mulhar Row. His father is only termed, in the record given to the author by the present minister † at Indore, a respectable cultivator, or Ryot, of a village in the Deckan, called Hull ‡, from which this chief and his descendants take their name of Holkar, or more properly Hulkur. §

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* In Hindustan this family are usually described as Gaorees, or goatherds, which is a shade below a tribe of shepherds, to which they consider themselves to belong.

† Tanoa Jogh.

‡ The village of Hull is in the Pergunnah of Phultun, in the Jaghire of Nimbalkur. It is near a bridge on the Nava, and about five coss from Phultun, and twenty coss from Poona.

§ Many of the principal Mahratta families derive their name from a compound similarly formed from that of the village where they were born, and the substantive Kur, which signifies an inhabitant, as Nimbal-Kur, Patun-Kur, &c.

Mulhar Row was born near the end of the seventeenth century*. His father, whose name was Cundajee, died when he was between four and five years of age; and his mother, in consequence of some dispute with her husband's relations, removed to the house of her brother, Narainjee †, a respectable landholder ‡, who lived in Candeish. The first employment of his nephew marks the condition of Narainjee. Mulhar Row was for several years appointed to watch the sheep of the family, from which occu-

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* I believe in A. D. 1693: there is no exact register or accurate account of births (except in their principal families) kept by the Mahrattas. They guess from events antecedent or subsequent to their birth. Had Mulhar Row been born a chief, his *Junnam Putee*, or the State of the Heavens, written by the astrologer at his birth, would have been kept. This is the usage among all Hindus of rank.

† He was usually called Narainjee Bargul.—In a Persian manuscript in my possession, she is said to have carried her son to one of her brothers, called Mudkur, who resided at the village of Sasunt; but I follow in this place the paper given me by the present minister, Tantia Jogh, which I believe to be correct. Mudkur was the maternal uncle of the second Mulhar Row, the son of Tukajee; and the similarity of name has occasioned the mistake of the Mahomedan author.

‡ Narainjee is termed a Zemindar, which (though it has another signification when applied to an official person) usually means a man possessing property in land, however small, in his own right. He was an inhabitant of the village of Telundah in Candeish.

pation (according to a fable which belongs to the youth of almost all Hindus that have attained eminence) he was only released by the accident of a snake having been seen to interpose its crest or hood* between his face and the rays of the sun, as he lay asleep in the fields. This at first gave alarm, but was afterwards favourably construed; and, according to the family tradition, his uncle Narainjee, acting from the impression it made, placed him in a small party† of horse which he kept in the service of Kuddum Bandee, a Mahratta chief of rank. Whatever circumstances raised the young Holkar from the profession of a shepherd to that of a soldier, he soon shewed that he possessed all the qualities necessary to acquire distinction in the latter. In one of the first actions in which he was engaged he slew a leader [illegible] Mulk. This exploit, and his extra- [illegible] and activity, brought him into early [illegible] uncle, Narainjee, gave him his [illegible] marriage; and, after a few years, his

* [illegible] was a Covra Capella, a species which is [illegible] sacred.

† [illegible]e in number.

‡ The name of this lady was Gotama Bhye, who afterwards rose to celebrity as the principal, and indeed only wife of Mulhar Row Holkar. Her family, that of Bargul, is now extinct. The brother of Gotama Bhye (whose name, like his father, was Narain) attained some eminence. He was in the service of the Raja of Odeypoor, who gave him the Pergunnah

increasing fame led the Paishwah Bajerow, to take him into his own service, in which he was at once raised to the command of five hundred horse. This change of masters was with the entire concurrence of Kuddum Bandee, who rejoiced in the good fortune of the young shepherd; and the latter gave a marked proof of his gratitude, by assuming the colours* of the Bandee chiefs.

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of Boodda, near Mundissor, as a Jaghire; half of which he bestowed as a present on his sister, who immediately named the principal town of her share Mulharghur, in honour of her husband, while her brother called the capital of his lands Narrainghur. At the death of Naraïnjee, this Jaghire went to his son Bouj Row; who, on the countries around his Jaghire being delivered over to the Mahrattas, became a Jaghiredar of the Holkar family. Bouj Row died about thirty years ago, leaving the Jaghire to his sons, Mogajee and Shumkur Row. It was resumed in the year 1805 by Jeswunt Row Holkar, and restored in 1807. Mogajee died A. D. 1813, leaving Narrainghur to Shumkur Row, who held it for two years; after which it was resumed, and Shumkur Row, who fled to the neighbouring fastness of Suttolee, gained a precarious livelihood by plundering. To induce him to leave off these incursions, two villages of his former Jaghire were given him: of these he was deprived after the peace of Mundissor, and the last of the family died a few months ago in extreme poverty.

* The standard is of a triangular shape, striped red and white, and surmounted by pendons of streamers of the same colours. The present representative of the once celebrated family of Bandee, is about twelve years of age. He fled some time ago from the persecution of the late Paishwah to Baroda, to beg a pittance for his support from the Guickwar, whose ancestors owe, in a great degree, their rise to his family.

which still remain the standard of the Holkar, as they are of the Guickwar family, who were originally followers of the same leader.

The progress of Mulhar Row Holkar to high command was rapid. Shortly after he entered the Paishwah's service, he was detached with the Paishwah's brother* to the Concan, in the subjection of which they were very successful. Bassein, and many other places of reputed strength in that quarter, were wrested from the Portuguese. The fame that Mulhar Row acquired on this occasion was subsequently increased by his conduct in a war with Nizam Ali Khan†, and on several lesser expeditions.

Mulhar Row Holkar received‡ his first lands North of the Nerbudda (twelve districts) in 1728, and in 1731 seventy additional districts were granted§ to this chief, who appears at the same time to have been nominated, by a letter from the Paishwah, to the general management‖ of the

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* Chimnajee.

† Holkar acquired much distinction in an affair that took place at Rakisbon, and on the peace which followed he obtained several possessions. The Pergunnah of Ambur was granted at this time to the Holkar family.

‡ In the Roze Kurd, or Diary of the Poona Office, in A. D. 1728, we find the first grants of twelve Mahals to Mulhar Jee Holkar, and thirty-three to Oodajee Puar.

§ Poona Diary.

‖ It is mentioned in the Poona Diary, that in this year, 1730-1, the Paishwah wrote a letter to Mulhar Row Holkar,

Mahratta interests in Malwa; and in the ensuing year he commanded, as has been stated, the advance of the army which invaded that province, when Dia Bahadur was defeated and slain. Mulhar Row was, at the period above-mentioned, at the head of a considerable detachment, and obtained, before the Mahrattas ascended the Vindhyan mountains, possession of several places in Nemaur, of which the town of Mhysir was the principal. When Malwa was conquered, the district of Indore was assigned to him for the support* of his troops. A.D. 1732

The high rank and consideration which Mulhar Row had now attained, have been before noticed, and are sufficiently proved, by his name being, as before related, in the deed of guarantee given by the principal military leaders to Mahomed Shah, as a security against the insincerity or perfidy of their superior, the Paishwah. He may, in fact, be deemed, from the invasion of Malwa till his death (a period of more than thirty years), the most distinguished of the military commanders† of the Mahratta empire; and he ap-

committing Malwa to his charge, and stating that he must regularly transmit the dues of the Sircar, &c. This employment was probably given him to check the growing ambition and insolence of Oudajee Puar.

* A. D. 1733.—It was, according to usage, a Serinjam grant, and revocable.

† He was, by an order of the Paishwah, associated with

pears, from his continual employment, to have been greatly favoured by Bajerow, to whose authority he continued, even in the zenith* of his power, to pay the greatest deference. The life of this leader, though he established his family and government in Central India, has little connexion with the history of that country. The Deckan and Hindustan, but especially the latter, were the scenes of his principal military achievements. In one of the first incursions of Bajerow into that region, he was among the chiefs who plundered the celebrated fair† at Khalka Bhowanee, within fifteen miles of Delhi, where the weak Emperor Mahomed Shah was then residing. The Mahrattas on this memorable and bold incursion shewed their contempt of the Mahomedan power, by hanging a hog over the bridge near Humayoon's tomb. The booty they took was great, and Mulhar Row obtained on this occasion a share of wealth and fame, which completely compensated for the discomfiture he had sustained a

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Ranojee Sindia, and directed to collect, on account of Sirdaishmookee and other Mahratta claims, thirty-five per cent. of the revenue of Malwa. These chiefs pledged themselves to pay one lack and five thousand rupees the first year, one lack and ten thousand the second, and one lack and twenty-five thousand rupees the third and future years, to the Poona state, dividing the remainder betwixt them equally.

* Poona Diary. † Jactra.

few months before from the Imperial army*. The Paishwah, who had been secretly aided in the enterprise by Jye Singh, returned by the way of Kotah, and had an interview with that Rajpoot prince, who, with others of his tribe, agreed to transfer their tributes to the Mahrattas; and, on Bajerow's proceeding to the Deckan, the tasks of realizing this revenue, and of prosecuting military operations, were committed to Mulhar Row Holkar, to whom considerable tracts† were assigned for the maintenance of his increased contingent. There is little interest in the detail of the predatory warfare which this chief carried on in Malwa, Rajpootana, and Hindustan; it was, in fact, a series of petty actions and pillaging incursions. In one of the latter, he took the baggage of Malika Zemanan, the Queen of Mahomed Shah; and his family preserved with great care, until the death of Ahia Bhye, two substantial records of this Mahratta victory over the property

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* The Imperial army, commanded by Burhan ul Mulk, defeated Mulhar Row at Mootta Baug, near Agra, to which place he had come after ravaging part of the Doab. The Mahratta chief with difficulty escaped, and joined Bajerow at Gualior.

† His grant from the Paishwah for the support of his troops is stated in a manuscript in my possession to have amounted to forty lacks of rupees in Malwa, and twenty lacks in the Deckan, or Southward of the Satpoorah range. The number of his contingent was fixed at fifteen thousand horse.

of a female; the one was a carriage*, the curtains of which were embossed with seed pearl, and the other a comb, richly ornamented with jewels, and worth above a lack of rupees.

Mulhar Row Holkar, encouraged by the wretched condition of the Mogiud empire, appears to have entertained the design of fixing the power of his nation permanently over Hindustan; and we find him, both alone, and in combination with other chiefs, endeavouring to effect this object, by operations which extended from the province of Oude to the Indus; and from the hills of Rajpootana to the mountains of Kumaon.

A.D. 1751. The Vizier Sefdar Jung had, in the reign of Ahmed Shah, called in the Mahrattas to preserve Oude from the Rohillas; and, during the war that ensued, Mulhar Row Holkar particularly distinguished himself by the night attack he made with a very small body of troops. His success on this occasion has been ascribed to an ancient stratagem.† He directed torches and lights to be tied to the horns of several thousand cattle, which were driven in one direction, while in another he placed lights upon every bush and

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* This species of carriage, which is called a Ruth, or Hackery, has two low wheels, and is drawn by bullocks.

† The similarity of this stratagem to that recorded of Hannibal is remarkable. Human invention has every where the same character; and this coincidence must be accidental, for

tree, and, when this was done, marched silently in the dark by a different route to the attack. The enemy, pressed in one quarter by an actual assault, and seeing lights in several others, thought themselves surrounded and in danger of destruction; they dispersed, and fled in dismay, leaving their camp to be plundered by the conquerors, whose leader acquired a just increase of fame from the victory; and, in recompense for his zeal and gallantry during the whole of the campaign, the Emperor granted him a deed for the Sirdaishmookee (a due of twelve and a half per cent. on the revenue) of Chandore, which is the only royal grant in possession of the family. It is indeed stated, that when Mulhar Row Holkar was asked what reward he wished, he replied, that he was the officer of the Paishwah, and desired to have no country independent of him, but that a nomination to the office of Daishmookh* of Chandore in Candeish would be acceptable. The request was complied with, and the family have ever since held the office. When the province of Candeish was recently ceded to the English government, a politic attention to the feelings of the house of Holkar led to a restoration of the title and immunities of the situation.

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we cannot suspect the Mahratta chief of having read the history of the Carthaginian leader.

* Daishmookh is a Hindu compound term, signifying the head of the district.

A.D. 1752. Mulhar Row Holkar had connected himself with Ghazi Udeen, one of the sons of Nizam ul Mulk, whom he accompanied to the Deckan to aid him in asserting his succession to the royal office (for such it had become) of Soubahdar, or viceroy, of that division of the empire: and the Paishwah, with the principal Mahratta chiefs, who had also engaged in the same enterprise, assembled at Aurungabad, from whence they were about to march, when the sudden death of Ghazi Udeen, by poison*, put an end to the expedition, and gave temporary peace to the Deckan.

Invited by the weakness of the Mahomedan dynasty in Hindustan, the Paishwah again detached Mulhar Row Holkar to that quarter to maintain his interests, conferring on him the title of Soubahdar†, and furnishing him with considerable reinforcements. The annual invasions of the Afghans under Ahmed Shah Abdalli had now commenced, and the Mahrattas were forced, as has been stated, to evacuate the Punjab.

A.D. 1759. Duttojee Sindia was slain; and Mulhar Row, who had encamped at Secundra, after intercepting and plundering some supplies going to the camp of

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* He was poisoned by his mother, whose desire to save another son, Nizam u' Dowlah, from destruction, impelled her to the horrid act.

† The title of Soubahdar descended to his successors; and Dowlet Row Sindia, and other rulers, always addressed them by it as their highest distinction.

Ahmed Shah, was himself surprised, and completely routed, by a corps of the Afghans. The occurrence of these events led to the battle of Paniput. The early escape of Mulhar Row, on a day so fatal to his nation, has given rise to some reproaches; but his advocates ascribe his safety to his superior knowledge as a leader, which made him, when he saw the action lost, keep his party together, and retreat with an order that none of the others preserved. This account will be more probable, if we credit the statement given of his quarrel with his commander, on the morning of the day on which the battle was fought. He had, it is affirmed, intreated Sedasheo Bhow to delay the action for one or two days; but the latter, whose pride and vanity exceeded all bounds *, impatient of the advice, exclaimed, "Who wants the counsel of a goatherd?" †. If the anecdote be true, we cannot wonder that a chief of Mulhar Row's character should not have anticipated success. ‡

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* Sedasheo Bhow used to allow his attendants to exclaim "Purseram Ootar," or an incarnation of Purseram, (a Deva, or demi-god) as one of his titles.

† A nearly similar taunt lost the Mahratta commander the services on this day of one of his most efficient allies, Sooruj Mull, the Jaut Prince of Bhurtpoor.

‡ The victory of Paniput, which is to be ascribed to the superior courage and energy of the Afghans, is naturally enough referred by the Mahrattas to other causes, and among these to the death of Biswas Row, the son of the Paishwah,

At all events he was one of the few that escaped; and he retreated into Central India, where he employed himself in settling his possessions. These had been increased, in the mode usual to Mahratta chiefs; and, with the exception of one district*, all that now belongs to the Holkars in Malwa was bequeathed by their founder, Mulhar Row, who, besides his lands in that province, left extensive claims upon Rajpoot princes. Taking advantage of the disputes which occurred on the death of Jye Singh, he had established a considerable influence in the country of Jeypoor, and on the succession of Madhoo Singh, through his aid, the latter agreed to pay in money, besides an amount of seventy-six lacks†, and a cession of four districts‡, an annual tribute of three lacks and a half of rupees. Mulhar Row had before obtained large domains in the Deckan, and a considerable part of the province of Candeish had been allotted to him for the maintenance of his troops. Independently of these acquisitions, various grants

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which was imprudently proclaimed to the army by the obstinate impatience of Sedasheo Bhow, who made the elephant sit down, that he might see for the last time his favourite nephew.

* Paal Mundawul, usurped from the Dhar family by Jeswunt Row Holker. The greater portion of it now forms part of Ghuffoor Khan's Jaghire.

† According to some statements eighty-four lacks.

‡ Tonk, Rampoorah, Torah, and Pohah.

of villages were given, both by the Paishwah and Nizam, as presents to females of his family.

Mulhar Row was seventy-six years of age when he died; he had for more than forty years of his life been a commander of reputation, and during the latter part of this period was certainly one of the most distinguished in the Mahratta confederacy. His remains were interred at a place now named, in honour of him, Mulhargunge, in the district of Alumpoor, and about forty miles from Gualior. Although inferior to Madhajee Sindia as a statesman, Mulhar Row was his equal, if not his superior, as a warrior. For simplicity of manners, and manly courage, no Mahratta leader stands higher in the opinion of his countrymen; nor were his talents limited to those of a soldier. His administration of the countries subject to his direct control was firm, but considerate; and if we judge of his character by his conduct to the petty Rajpoot princes of Malwa, the conclusion will be favourable to his memory. He conciliated their respect, if not their regard, by his good faith and moderation* in the exercise of power. Many of them were his associates and adherents†, and

* He is stated to have reduced the tribute of Pertaubghur to seventy-five thousand rupees, which, though as much as the chief of that petty state could pay, was not more than one half of what had been before assessed.

† Among the principal of those chiefs who were his friends and supporters as well as tributaries, were Bulbudder Singh, Raja of Rajooghur, and Gokul Doss, Raja of Baglee.

their descendants still speak of his memory with sentiments of gratitude. This feeling, however, may owe much of its strength to the opposite conduct of some of his successors. The principal virtue of Mulhar Row was his generosity. He had personally no regard for money; he was wont to declare (probably with truth) that he understood nothing of accounts, and he listened with impatience to those ministers who recommended the diminution of his frequent largesses *. To his relations, and indeed to all Mahrattas, he was uncommonly kind. It is stated of this chief, that in his conduct to the Paishwah, and in the performance of all his duties as a member of the Mahratta confederacy, he did that from the heart, which Madhajee Sindia did from the head: the one was a plain, sincere soldier, and the other added to great qualities all the art of a crafty politician.

Mulhar Row Holkar had only one son, Kundee Row; who, some years before the battle of Pani-
A. D. 1754. put, was killed at the siege of Kumbhere †, near

* It is recorded of Mulhar Row Holkar, that, when pleased with a soldier's gallantry, he used to exclaim, "Fill his shield with rupees."

† Kumbhere is four coss from Deig: it lies between that place and Bhurtpoor, equally distant from each. Nawul Singh, grandson of Soorui Mul, was at this period Raja of Bhurtpoor. After he made peace with Mulhar Row, a Mausoleum, or Chettery, was built in honour of Kundee Row, and the revenue

Deig. This prince had married Alia Bhye, of a family of the name of Sindia, by whom he had one son and one daughter. To the former, whose name was Mallee Row, Ragobah Dada (the uncle of the reigning Paishwah, who was then commanding the Mahratta armies in Central India) immediately sent a Khelaut, or honorary dress, recognizing him by the act as successor to the power and possessions of his grandfather. This youth, however, did not long enjoy the dignity; and his death, which occurred nine months after his elevation, was very melancholy. He had been always considered of weak and unsettled intellect, but no symptom of positive insanity had appeared before he came to the head of the government, when

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of five villages assigned as a charity for the support of the Brahmu[illegible] attend it, and pray for the deceased. The [illegible] ing of [illegible] Mahrattas towards the Jauts of Bhurtpoor is s[illegible] from [illegible] tion, which still exists, of the protection th[illegible] aja of th[illegible] afforded their ancestors after the disastrous battle of P[illegible] He not only clothed and fed the fugitives who came [illegible] territories, but furnished them with means of reachi[illegible] homes at the Deckan. In consequence, there is har[illegible] family of any note in this nation that has not a tradition of [illegible] a debt of gratitude to the Jauts of Bhurtpoor. Such facts are important, as a knowledge of them often gives a very differe[illegible] colour to actions of political consequence. It is, however, to be added, that, according to Mahratta system, this feeling did not prevent the chiefs of Bhurtpoor being laid under contributio[illegible]s, when their professed friends were able to compel the [illegible] into payment.

every action displayed it. His conduct was at first more marked by extremes of folly than of guilt. The life of his mother was devoted to acts of charity and benevolence, and she was particularly kind to Brahmins. This tribe became objects of Mallee Row's malicious ridicule. It was a common usage with him to place scorpions in clothes and slippers that he gave them; he also put these venomous reptiles in pots filled with rupees, which he invited the holy mendicants to take; and, when their eager cupidity caused them to be stung, his joy was as excessive, as the grief of the pious Alia Bhye, who used to lament aloud her hard destiny, in having a perfect demon born to her as a son. The avowed sentiments of his wickedness, and his incapacity for government, have given rise to a report*, that this admirable woman hastened the death of her own offspring. [illegible] evidence proves [illegible] of his

* This report of the death of [illegible] ed to several European inquirers, b[illegible]l. I thought it a duty, as connected w[illegible] Bhye, to make the most minute invest[illegible]nd the result has been a conviction of [illegible]ocence of a crime, which no circumstances co[illegible] I have no doubt that she was led by horror [illegible] of insanity, and a despair of his recovery, to l[illegible] as a fortunate event for him, herself, and th[illegible]ch a feeling is an honour, instead of a disgrace.

death is referred by all that have been interrogated (and among them many were on the spot when it occurred) to the same cause. He had slain, in a jealous fury, an embroiderer, who, he believed, had formed an intimacy with a female servant of his family. The innocence of the man was established, and remorse for the crime brought on so severe a paroxysm of madness in Mallee Row, as to alarm all for his life. It is a confirmed belief with many of the natives of India, that departed spirits have, on some occasions, the power of seizing upon, and destroying the living. It was rumoured, that the embroiderer was a man with supernatural power, that he warned Mallee Row not to slay him, or he would take terrible vengeance; and the ravings of the latter were imputed to the ghost he had murdered, and who, according to their preposterous belief, now haunted him in the form of a Jin, or demon. Mo Bhye, satisfied of this fact, used to sit days and nights by the bed of her afflicted son, holding communion, as she thought, with the spirit that possessed him, and who spoke to her through his organs. She shed tears in abundance, and passed whole hours in prayer. In the hope of soothing the demon, she offered to build a temple to the deceased, and to settle an estate upon his family, if he would only leave her son. But all was vain: —a voice still seemed to answer, "He slew me

"innocent, and I will have his life." Such is the popular tale of the death of Mallee Row; an event that only merits notice as connected with the history of Alia Bhye, whom it compelled to come forward to save from ruin the interests of the family she represented, and to exhibit in the person of a female, that combined talent, virtue, and energy, which made her, while she lived, a blessing to the country over which she ruled, and has associated her memory with every plan of improvement and just government in the province of Malwa.

The daughter of Alia Bhye had been married into another family, and could therefore, according to Hindu usage, have no claim to participate in the administration of the Holkar sovereignty. Under these circumstances, Gungadhur Jeswunt, in 1766. the Brahmin minister of the late Mulhar Row, strongly recommended, that some child (distantly related to the family) should be adopted to succeed Mallee Row, [illegible] which would have secured the continuance of his own authority as minister*. This [illegible] was combined with the offer of [illegible] provision for Alia Bhye, whose [illegible] admitted, but her sex objected to, [illegible] qualification for

* Gungadhur Jeswunt held [illegible] Dewan, or Minister, to the Holkar family from [illegible]. He had been nominated by Bajerow to that [illegible] Row, when the latter was first promoted to [illegible]

the conducting of public affairs. Gunghadur at the same time proposed to give a considerable present* to Ragobah Dada, in the event of his agreeing to the arrangement, and promoting its execution. This venal chief gave a ready assent to the measure; and his concurrence was considered by the ministers so conclusive, that he waited upon Alia Bhye, completely assured, that, if other motives failed, a despair of successful resistance would compel her to acquiesce; but he soon discovered his error. He was told at once by this high-minded woman, that his plan was disgraceful to the house of Holkar, and should never have her consent; and she particularly disapproved of his intended gift to Ragobah, whose right of interference on the occasion she entirely rejected. The heirs of Mulhar Rao, she said, were extinct on the death of her son, and she had, as wife and mother of the two last representatives of the family, the exclusive privilege of selecting the successor,—and that just claim she was resolved, at all hazards, to maintain. It is probable that Alia Bhye had not only also consulted with her own principal adherents, but with the Mahratta military chiefs who were in Malwa when these events occurred. Her whole conduct, however, at this crisis of her for-

* This description of present to a superior is termed Nazerana.

[illegible] Holkar government, shewed that [illegible] had been seriously taken, and would be firmly maintained. On hearing that Ragobah was making preparations to compel her to compliance, she sent him a message, earnestly advising him not to make war on a woman, from which he might incur disgrace, but could never derive honour. She added, to give effect to this remonstrance, every preparation for hostilities. The troops of Holkar evinced enthusiasm in her cause; and she made a politic display of her determination to lead them to combat in person, by directing four bows, with quivers full of arrows, to be fitted to the corners of the howdah, or seat, on her favourite elephant. Ragobah seemed at first equally resolved to proceed to extremities; but all his followers were reluctant; and Madhajee Sindia, and Jannojee Bhonslah, refused to unite with him, and an ungrateful minister, to subvert the independence of the Holkar family. These sentiments, and the arrival of a letter from the Paishwah Madhoo Row, to whom Alia Bhye had referred, turned the scale completely in her favour. That prince directed his uncle to desist from all farther attempts against the respectable widow of Kundee Row, whose right to the management of affairs was indisputable. These injunctions were implicitly obeyed; and Alia Bhye
A.D. 1767 gave, in her first act, a proof of her judgment, to which much of the prosperity and reputation that

afterwards attended her administration may be referred. She elected for the commander of her army, and to fulfil those duties which as a female she could not perform, Tukajee Holkar, a chief of the same tribe, but no way related* to Mulhar Row. Tukajee was highly esteemed as a soldier by that chief, and commanded the Pagah, or household troops; and, before he had reached his present power, had established a character, which he maintained through life, of a plain unaffected Mahratta soldier. Ragobah, after this arrangement, proceeded to Poona; and was invited to take the route of Mhysir, where he was most hospitably entertained by Alia Bhye. She directed the contingent of the family to accompany him to the Mahratta capital, under the command of Tukajee, who, she desired, should in person receive from the Paishwah an honorary dress, and a commission, confirming him in his high station. All her wishes were complied with; and she in her turn restored, on the ground of his former services and high character, the minister Gunghadur to favour.

The divided authority established in the Holkar state, from the day of Tukajee's elevation, had a

* As this chief is the grandfather of the present representative of the house of Holkar, he is always termed, by the present minister and others, a relation of the great Mulhar Row: but this is not the fact.

character which, judging from common rules, was not likely to admit of its subsisting a week; but it remained for above thirty years undisturbed by jealousy or ambition. This is to be ascribed to the virtue and moderation of the parties, to their respect for each other, and to their having distinct, and, generally speaking, distant spheres of action.

Alia Bhye had chosen Tukajee to command the armies of the state, and to be the titled head of the sovereignty, after he had attained an age when the mind is confirmed in its habits. A partiality for her own choice made her very indulgent; and Tukajee seems never to have forgotten for a moment his original sense of obligation to his benefactress; besides which, the respect that her virtues and liberal piety had established over all India, had given her such a reputation, that to have treated her with neglect or ingratitude, much less to have returned her generosity with any usurpation of her property or rights, would have consigned him to general execration. It is but justice, however, to this manly soldier to declare, that he appears never to have needed the check of such considerations. Although for a time much under the influence of one of the principal ministers* of the government,

* The name of this man was Narroo Gunneiss. He is represented to have been an artful and ambitious Brahmin.

who was not favourably disposed towards Alia Bhye, he never deviated from the path he first pursued. He was more than obedient: he was dutiful, and all his actions were directed to please and conciliate the princess, to whom he was solely indebted for his high station. He constantly called her his mother; but, as she was much younger than him, this relation was not engraved upon his seal. On that he was styled, by her command, "Tukajee, the Son of Mulhar Row Holkar."—These facts will appear still more extraordinary, when we advert to the manner in which the state was governed. When Tukajee was in the Deckan (and he remained there at one period for twelve years), all the territories of the family South of the Satpoorah range, were managed by him, and the countries North of that limit were under Alia Bhye, to whom the different tributaries also made their annual payments. While he was in Hindustan, (he never remained long in Malwa,) he collected the revenues of the countries that had been acquired there, and in Bundelcund, and also the tributes of Rajpootana. The districts in Malwa and Nemaur continued, as usual, under the direction of Alia Bhye; and her authority was on such occasions extended over the possessions in the Deckan. The treasures of the family, which were very considerable, (said to have been two millions,) remained with Alia Bhye; and she had, besides, personal

estates yielding annually above four lacks of rupees, which, with the hoard abovementioned, were entirely expended at her discretion; while all the rest of the receipts were brought into a general account, and applied to the expenditure of the government. The accounts of receipts and disbursements were kept with scrupulous exactness; and Alia Bhye, after paying the civil and militia* charges, sent the balance that remained in the public treasury, to supply the exigencies of the army employed abroad. Tukajee was, no doubt, from the distance at which he was placed, and the scenes in which he was engaged, often obliged to act for himself; but he is stated to have referred, on every occasion in which the general interests of the government were implicated, to Alia Bhye; and in matters relating to peace or war, or to the foreign relations of the state, her supremacy was proclaimed by the envoys† of all the principal, as well as petty, rulers of India residing at her court: ministers, deputed directly from her, resided at Poona‡, Hyderabad, Seringapatam, Nagpoor, Lucknow,

* The term Sebundy, which means a local military, employed for the preserving of internal peace, and to aid in revenue collections, may be literally interpreted "Militia."

† Vakeels.

‡ When Tukajee was in the Deckan, he was the medium of all intercourse with the Paishwah; but in his absence, Alia Bhye kept an intelligent agent at the court of Poona.

and Calcutta; while inferior agents remained at the courts* of the petty Rajas, particularly those from whom tribute was collected.

It appears, from what has been related, that Alia Bhye was the actual head of the government, and Tukajee, gratified by his high station and her complete confidence, continued, during her life, to exercise no duties beyond those of commander-in-chief of the army, and the collection of the revenues that his vicinity enabled him to realize with more convenience than any other agent of her administration. The servants of the Holkar government, who filled offices at the period, speak all the same language; and, with every disposition to praise Tukajee, strengthened by his grandson being on the throne†, they never go higher in their eulogium than to say, that he fulfilled all the expectations of Alia Bhye, and was to the last hour of his existence attentive, faithful, and obedient.

It has been stated, that Tukajee went to Poona to attend the Paishwah, but his stay was short in the Deckan. While the behaviour of the Bhurtpoor Jauts, subsequent to the battle of Paniput, had excited gratitude in the minds of the Mahrattas, that of many of the Mahomedan chiefs in Hindustan, and above all, of Nujeeb ud Dowlah‡,

* Durbars. † Musnud.

‡ To the courage and conduct of this celebrated chief, the victory of Paniput has been in a great degree attributed, and

had inflamed the resentment of the discomfited nation. An attack upon Nujeebabad, the stronghold of the latter's family, was determined on, and a large army marched from the Deckan to carry it into execution. Tukajee was on the expedition, but acted only a subordinate part, being under the direction of Ramchunder Gunneiss*, who commanded on the part of the Paishwah. It appears from a Persian manuscript, that Tukajee opened a communication with Nujeeb Khan, on the ground of the ancient friendship that had subsisted between him and Mulhar Row Holkar, which was approved by Ramchunder, but reprobated by Madhajee Sindia, who asked if a peaceable settlement was to be substituted for the revenge which they had united to accomplish. "I require (he said) for the Paishwah the country "possessed by this chief and the Afghans. I "demand for myself the blood of my brother †, of "my nephews ‡, and my own leg, of all use of "which I am deprived. Nor will I abandon my "hopes of vengeance, because Tukajee Holkar

A. D. 1770. Hejira 1184

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there can be no doubt he was the chief author of the combination among the Mahomedans, which produced that memorable result.

* This chief is distinguished from another of the same name by his title of Beeneewalla, or quarter-master-general of the Mahratta armies. He had on this occasion above sixty thousand horse, of whom many were stated to be Pindarries.

† Duttajee. ‡ Junkajee and Sambajee.

"chooses to make a brother of this Omrah. You "may write, however, (he added) to Madhoo Row "at Poona; and if he sanctions by his command "such proceedings, I am a servant, and shall "obey."* These sentiments did not prevent the counsel of Tukajee from being adopted. It was thought best to take advantage of the good disposition evinced by Nujeeb ud Dowlah, lest proceeding to extremities against so brave and popular a chief might again unite the Mahomedans; and it was farther foreseen, that peace with him would enable them to levy, undisturbed, tribute on the Jauts and Rajpoots, and increase their resources for future operations. This policy was pursued, and a twelvemonth passed in plundering their Hindu friends.† Nujeeb ud Dowlah was at this moment in the last stage of his existence. He visited the Mahratta camp, and an attempt was Hejira 1185 made to reconcile him with Sindia, but neither were sincere; and, a few weeks before Nujeeb ud Dowlah retired to his capital to die, he placed the hand of his son Zabita Khan in that of Tukajee, and requested his protection, anticipating the

* I translated this from a Persian manuscript, written for Sir Charles Mallet, by Meer u Deen Hussein Khan, the father of the Nabob Kunal Udeen, and given to me by the latter's son, the present commander of the Guickwar horse in Malwa. Meer u Deen was an actor in the scenes he describes.

† Among these, Newul Singh of Bhurtpoor, for whom they possessed such friendship, was the chief sufferer.

to overwhelm his family. this Omrah removed the last to the Mahratta conquest of Hindustan, capital of which, and its finest provinces, they soon afterwards subjugated. They were aided in the accomplishment of this undertaking by the weak Shah Allum, who had left the protection of the British government to lend his name, and what little influence he still retained, to enable the enemies of his dynasty and religion to destroy the only Mahomedan chief who possessed sufficient
A.D. 1772. energy to retard their progress. These events led, as has been stated, to the aggrandizement of Madhajee Sindia, who soon became the real sovereign of Delhi and its surrounding territories: while Tukajee Holkar returned to Malwa, where he declined to the rank of a secondary chief before the rising fortunes of his abler and more aspiring rival.

The death of the Paishwah Madhoo Row*, and the murder of his younger brother, Narrain Row, by Ragobah Dada, called, at this period, all the Mahratta chiefs to the Deckan. The celebrated confederacy of Barrah Bhai, or the twelve† bro-

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* Madhoo Row died the 18th November, 1772: and his brother, Narrain Row, was murdered on the 30th August, 1773.

† I never could learn why the number twelve was used on this occasion to express, as it did, an indefinite number. With

thers, as the chiefs were designated who combined against the murderer, was joined by Madhajee Sindia and Tukajee Holkar, which involved these leaders in a war with the British government, whose name was, at this crisis of Mahratta history, associated with the cause of guilt and usurpation. The united chiefs proclaimed Madhoo Row, the posthumous son of Narrain Row, Paishwah; but the real power of that high station devolved on Ballajee Junardun, commonly called Nana Furnavese, an able Brahmin, who acted a prominent part in forming the combination against Ragobah. The results of this combination have been noticed. The treaty* of Salbye confirmed the triumph of those by whom it had been effected.

Tukajee Holkar appears acting a very conspicuous part in a war which the Poona government, aided by the Nizam, carried on against Tippoo Sultan; and he proceeded, the year after it was concluded, to Mhysir, to pay his respects to Alia Bhye. There, however, his stay was short, A. D. 1785-6.

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the attachment to usage that marks the Mahrattas, the term Barrah Bhai has been continued, as denoting combination; and a body of Mahratta horse now in the service of Holkar, composed of parties of different chiefs, is distinguished by this appellation.

* A treaty was concluded by Colonel Upton in 1776, but hostilities recommenced, and the war was not terminated till the treaty of Salbye.

as he was called upon to take a share in the operations which terminated in establishing the power of Ali Bahadur*, the natural son of Bajerow, over a great portion of Bundelcund, and that of Madhajee Sindia over the whole of Hindustan. The force of Tukajee bore no proportion to that of the latter chief; and he consequently derived little benefit from these conquests. The claims of the family of Holkar to an equal share were advanced and nominally admitted, and at a settlement of accounts† some districts were granted to liquidate the acknowledged balance in their favour; but the predominating controul of Madhajee prevented any benefit from the cession, and when that chief proceeded to Poona, to establish his influence at the court of the Paishwah, Tukajee became involved in disputes with the leaders, particularly Lukwa Dada, left by Sindia in Hindustan, which terminated, as has been before stated, in an action at the pass of Lakheree, where he was
A. D. 1792. defeated by the infantry of Deboigne.‡ This vic-

* He was the son of the first Bajerow, by a Mahomedan mother: and as his birth deprived him of the privileges of his father's tribe, he was, though acknowledged by the latter as his son, brought up in the religion of his mother.

† These accounts had commenced between Ranojee Sindia and Mulhar Row Holkar, and remained unsettled till the period mentioned.

‡ This, like all Mahratta defeats, is imputed to treachery; and in the manuscript given me by Tantia Jogh, no less

tory was, from reasons before assigned, productive of no immediate consequences. Sindia's troops returned to Hindustan, and those of Tukajee pursued their march to Indore and Mhysir, without retaliating the aggression upon Madhajee's possessions in Malwa. This fact leads to a conclusion, that it was more of a quarrel between Tukajee and Madhajee's commander, than between the Sindia and Holkar families.

Tukajee remained but a few months in Malwa, from whence he was summoned to join the Mahratta chiefs, then assembling at Poona for a general attack on the dominions of Nizam Ali Khan, which had been long projected. The result of this attack has been narrated. Tukajee Holkar, who was at this period about seventy years of age, had risen to higher consideration after the death of Madhajee Sindia, being looked up to as the oldest of those Mahratta military chiefs who had witnessed the zenith of their glory; but his real strength was greatly inferior to that of Dowlet Row Sindia, whose youthful impetuosity calculated solely on force; and the consequence was that Tukajee acted a less distinguished part in the transactions which followed the defeat of the Nizam, and the death of the Paishwah Madhoo Row, than might have been

A. D. 1795.

A. D. 1797.

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persons are accused than Casi Row and Bappoo Holkar, the son and nephew of Tukajee.

expected from his age and reputation. He appears, throughout this scene of unparalleled intrigue, as the friend and supporter of Sindia; but he was probably, from years and infirmities, incapable of exertion; for he died before it terminated, leaving behind him the character of a good soldier, a plain unaffected man, and one whose courage was superior to his craft, which is no slight praise for a Mahratta leader. We are greatly prepossessed in favour of Tukajee, by the temper, gratitude, and obedience which he evinced towards Alia Bhye. Throughout the long period that intervened between his elevation and her death, which occurred two years previous to his own, there never was any serious* dispute, much less a rupture, between them. This reflects great credit on both; but, perhaps, the greatest on Alia Bhye, whose government of the Holkar territories in Central India must now be noticed. It presents us with few events like those which have been narrated; but its merit consists in their absence. The character of her administration was for more than thirty years the basis of the prosperity which attended the dynasty to which she belonged; and although, latterly, it was obscured by the genius

* I considered this fact so extraordinary, that I made the most minute enquiries from numerous persons personally acquainted with both: these all confirmed the truth of what we learn from their history.

and success of Madhajee Sindia, it continued to sustain its rank during her life as one of the principal branches of the Mahratta empire. The manner in which the authority of the state was divided between Tukajee and Alia Bhye has been already mentioned. The management of all the provinces in Malwa and Nemaur was the peculiar department of the latter; and her great object was, by a just and moderate government, to improve the condition of the country, while she promoted the happiness of her subjects. She maintained but a small force independent of the territorial militia; but her troops were sufficient, aided by the equity of her administration, to preserve internal tranquillity; and she relied on the army of the state, actively employed in Hindustan and the Deckan, and on her own reputation, for safety against all external enemies.

It is not common with the Hindus* (unless in those provinces where they have learnt the degrading usage from their Mahomedan conquerors) to confine females, or to compel them to wear

* The principal exceptions are the higher classes of Rajpoots, and particularly the Rajas and chiefs of this tribe; and there is reason to conclude they have adopted the practice, in a great degree, from the Mahomedans, as we find many passages in their popular tales to warrant a belief that their customs in this respect were different when the Hindu government prevailed over India.

veils. The Mahrattas of rank (even the Brahmins*) have, with few exceptions, rejected the custom, which is not prescribed by any of their religious institutions. Alia Bhye, therefore, offended no prejudice, when she took upon herself the direct management of affairs, and sat every day for a considerable period, in open Durbar, transacting business. Her first principle of government appears to have been moderate assessment, and an almost sacred respect for the native rights of village officers and proprietors of lands†. She heard every complaint in person, and although she continually referred causes to courts of equity and arbitration, and to her ministers, for settlement, she was always accessible; and so strong was her sense of duty, on all points connected with the distribution of justice, that she is represented as not only patient, but unwearied in the investigation of the most insignificant causes, when appeals were made to her decision.

Aware of the partiality which was to be expected from information supplied by members and adherents of the Holkar family, regarding Alia Bhye, facts were collected from other quarters

* Mr. Scott Waring, in his History of the Mahrattas, mentions having frequently seen the wife of the Ex-Paishwah Bajerow exercising her horse.

† These are termed Wuttundars, or holders of native rights, in Central India. A particular account of their duties and immunities will be given in the Chapter on Revenue.

to guard against the impressions, which the usual details of her administration are calculated to make. It was thought the picture had been overcharged with bright colours, to bring it more into contrast with the opposite system that has since prevailed in the countries she formerly governed; but although enquiries have been made among all ranks and classes, nothing has been discovered to diminish the eulogiums, or rather blessings, which are poured forth whenever her name is mentioned. The more, indeed, enquiry is pursued, the more admiration is excited; but it appears above all extraordinary, how she had mental and bodily powers to go through with the labours she imposed upon herself, and which from the age of thirty to that of sixty*, when she died, were unremitted. The hours gained from the affairs of the state were all given to acts of devotion and charity; and a deep sense of religion appears to have strengthened her mind in the performance of her worldly duties. She used to say, that she "deemed herself answerable to "God for every exercise of power;" and in the full spirit of a pious and benevolent mind was wont to exclaim, when urged by her ministers to acts of extreme severity, "Let us, mothers, beware how "we destroy the works of the Almighty."

* She succeeded to the administration of the Holkar government in A. D. 1765, and died in A. D. 1795.

From a very minute narrative* which has been obtained of Ahia Bhye's daily occupations, it appears, that she rose one hour before daybreak to say her morning prayers, and perform the customary ceremonies. She then heard the sacred volumes of her faith read for a fixed period, distributed alms, and gave food, in person, to a number of Brahmins. Her own breakfast was then brought, which was always of vegetable diet; for, although the rules of her tribe did not require it, she had forsworn animal food. After breakfast she again went to prayers, and then took a short repose; after rising from which, and dressing herself, she went about two o'clock to her Durbar, or court, where she usually remained till six in the evening, and when two or three hours had been devoted to religious exercises and a frugal repast, business recommenced about nine o'clock, and continued until eleven, at which hour she retired to rest. This course of

* This was given me by Earnmul Dada, the present manager of Mhysir. This sensible old man (now near ninety years of age) was the Kower, or adopted domestic, of Ahia Bhye. His occupation was to wash her tutelary deities and attend her person. His reverence for her memory exceeds all bounds. He gave me a manuscript containing the account in the text of her usual appropriation of time, and of the devotional exercises she imposed upon herself every month in the year, which varied according to the rank and attributes of the presiding divinity of the season.

life, marked by prayer, abstinence, and labour, knew little variation, except what was occasioned by religious fasts and festivals (of which she was very observant), and the occurrence of public emergencies.

The success of Alia Bhye in the internal administration of her dominions was altogether wonderful. The principles upon which the collections were made and justice administered, will be noticed hereafter; suffice it here to say, that so efficient were those relations which she had established with foreign princes, that her territories were never invaded, except for a few weeks by Ulsee Rana of Odeypoor, who made an unsuccessful* effort to aid some of his tribe who had seized upon Rampoora. The undisturbed internal tranquillity of the country was even more remarkable than its exemption from foreign attack. This was equally produced by her manner of treating the peaceable, as well as the more turbulent and predatory classes; she was indulgent to the former, and, although firm and severe, just and considerate towards the latter. We shall find no more correct standard by which to estimate a

* Alia Bhye instantly detached a force under Shereef Bye, the commander of her guards, who surprised and defeated the invaders at the village of Palsorah, twenty-four miles North of Mundisoor. The Rana, on hearing of this event, sued for peace, which was granted.

government in India, than the permanence, or instability of its ministers, and the reputation of its provincial and other public officers. It is a criterion by which the natives always judge of their governors. Alia Bhye had the same minister*, a Brahmin of excellent character, throughout the whole period of her reign; and her managers were seldom, if ever, changed †.

Indore, which she had raised from a village to a wealthy city, was always regarded by her with particular consideration. Many extraordinary instances of her maternal regard for its inhabitants are narrated. Tukajee Holkar, when encamped near it with the army, had desired (at the instigation of some interested persons) to share in the wealth of a rich banker ‡ who died

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* His name was Govind Punt Gunnoo.

† Kundee Row was for more than twenty years Kemisdar, or manager of Indore, and it is the general tradition that he gratified his mistress less, by the regularity with which he collected the revenue, than the spectacle he presented her of a happy and contented population.

‡ The name of this banker, or Soucar, was Davychund. It is true that, according to the usage of the Bunniah tribe, the wife succeeds, and it may in strictness be termed unjust to have acted otherwise than Alia Bhye did on this occasion; but on reference to the common practice of Native governments we find that, in such cases, a large share of the property is often claimed by the state, and a farther sum is usually required for charitable purposes.

without children. The wife of the deceased hastened to Mhysir, where she implored relief of Ahia Bhye. Her story was listened to; a dress, which confirmed her as sole mistress of the house and property of her husband, was bestowed upon her; and Tukajee instantly received an order to march a short distance from Indore, and not to molest her city with unjust exactions. A ready obedience to the mandate made amends for the error of Tukajee, while the occurrence more endeared Ahia Bhye to a town where her name is to this day not only revered, but adored.

Ahia Bhye derived much aid, in the internal administration of her country, from the strength and reputation of Madhajee Sindia, which maintained tranquillity throughout his possessions in Central India. She had been greatly indebted to this chief at the commencement of her career, and she continued through life to cultivate his friendship with the fullest sense of its importance. His character forbids the conclusion that his motives for supporting her were disinterested; but, although he might have desired to share the treasures left by Mulhar Row to his successors, no prince was ever more alive to the value of impression; and in seeking to be considered the friend of Ahia Bhye, Madhajee was well aware how much he advanced his own reputation. It does not appear how she first purchased his support: subsequently,

however, she lent him thirty lacks of rupees*, for which he gave a bond, but probably without any intention of ever paying it. He perhaps thought his active friendship conferred benefits amply discharging the pecuniary obligation. His managers and other officers, civil and military, had orders to aid and support her authority; and this gave a strength to her government, which, from the intermixed nature of their respective territories, could have been derived from no other quarter.

The tributaries of the Holkar family were, during the administration of Alia Bhye, treated with an attention and moderation that made delays even in their payments unusual; and when these occurred, her indignant remonstrances, which were as severe as they were just, inspired an awe that hardly ever failed of effect. The numerous petty leaders† of the Rajpoot tribes, who had, from their ability to pillage, established a claim to a portion of the revenue, were almost all brought to fair and amicable terms. And, as Madhajee Sindia observed the same policy, this class, generally speaking, were peaceable and contented

* Besides this loan, Hurkar Bhye (often called Mossaub Bhye), the favourite mistress of Mulhar Row, advanced Madhajee, when in distress, six lacks of rupees.

† These chiefs, who are called Grassiahs, will be particularly described in a subsequent chapter.

The fond object of her life was to promote the prosperity of all around her; she rejoiced, we are told, when she saw bankers, merchants, farmers, and cultivators, rise to affluence; and, so far from deeming their increased wealth a ground of exaction, she considered it a legitimate claim to increased* favour and protection. The set-

* Khealee Ram (the nephew of Hunut Row, formerly a civil officer of high rank in the service of the Nabob of Bhopal), who was two years one of my principal writers, informed me that about thirty-two years ago, when he was manager of Bersiah, a rich Soucar, Subh Kem Doss, died at Seronje without heirs. The manager demanded three lacks of rupees, threatening, if this sum was not paid, to seize the property for the state. The family desired the widow to adopt a son; but this he peremptorily refused to allow, unless they paid the present, or rather fine, he had demanded. The widow and her nephew whom she wished to adopt, attended by a numerous party of relations and friends, hastened to Mhysir. Ala Bhye did not keep them a day in suspense; she removed her manager, confirmed the adoption, and refused even a small present. Taking the adopted child upon her knee, she gave him clothes, some jewels, and a palanquin, and sent him and all concerned back to Seronje, to speak, while they existed, of her goodness and justice. The object of her bounty is still alive, but he has lived to be despoiled of all his wealth by Ameer Khan, the present possessor of Seronje.

Another remarkable instance of Ala Bhye's disinterestedness was related to me by Tantia Jogh, the present minister of the Holkar state. Tuppee Doss and Benares Doss, two brothers, who were Soucars, or bankers, in Kergong, died about the same date, without heirs, leaving two lacks of rupees in specie, and two more due to them. Tuppee

clements of Ahia Bhye with the Gond plunderers on the Nerbudda, and the Bheels who inhabit the mountainous tracts of the province, were as happy as her other arrangements; and that they had not complete success, is to be imputed to other causes than her want of vigour or sagacity. She first tried gentle measures of conciliation with this class, but, finding them ineffectual, she had recourse to a more rigorous system. Several incorrigible offenders* were taken and put to death. Such examples of her severe justice were rare; for though she knew well how to inspire dread, when it was necessary, in the minds of the most hardened robbers, conciliation and kind-

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Dosa's wife came to Ahia Bhye, at Mhysir, and through the elder brother of Cantia Jogh, proposed to make over to the state the fortune her husband and her brother had accumulated under its protection. Ahia Bhye declined the offer, and advised the widow (if she did not want it) to bestow it in charity, or expend it in public and useful buildings that would do honour to her husband's memory. The advice was taken: and a Ghaut, or flight of stone steps, to the river at Kergong, with a temple dedicated to Gungatey, still remain as memorials of the manner in which the wealth which Ahia Bhye rejected was expended.

* Amongst these was Hundroop Singh, a noted freebooter, whose strong-hold was Sillanah, on the banks of the Nerbudda. The trouble I had for three years with the descendants of this robber chief gave me full insight into the atrocities which compelled Ahia Bhye to exert a severity to which her nature was reluctant.

ness were the means she preferred; and, while she deterred them from the continuance of a life of plunder by the establishment of posts, she invited them to a better mode of life, by the most considerate attention to their habits. Their ancient right to a small duty* on goods passing their hills was admitted, but she exacted, in recompense for her concessions, and for the grants she made them of waste lands, an obligation to protect the roads, and to recover any property that was stolen within their respective† limits. There would be no end to a minute detail of the measures of her internal policy. It is sufficient to observe, she has become, by general suffrage, the model of good government in Malwa. Tantia Jogh, the present minister of the prince Mulhar Row, is satisfied that he is at once pleasing us, gratifying the family with the manage-

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* This is called the Bheel's Cowry. It differs in almost every place, but is no where above half a piece on a bullock load.

† I have had the same settlement to make with the same class of people; and while the present minister of the Marhatta government has considered that he went as far in moral conciliation as he could, by agreeing to restore the re[illegible] which were established in Ahalya Bhye's time, I have found the rudest inhabitants of the mountains desire [illegible] indulgence. This is incontrovertible evidence of [illegible] conduct in this difficult department of her administration.

ment of whose affairs he is entrusted, and gaining popularity, by professing to follow the example of this extraordinary female; and her name is considered such excellent authority, that an objection is never made, when her practice is pleaded as the precedent.

The correspondence of Ahia Bhye extended to the most remote parts of India. It was generally carried on through Brahmins, who were the agents of her pious munificence, which was as unexampled as it was unbounded. When the treasures of Holkar came into her possession, she is stated to have appropriated them, by the performance of a religious ceremony *, (common with Hindus,) to the purposes of charity and good works. She built several forts, and at that of Jaun constructed a road, with great labour and cost, over the Vindhya range, where it is almost perpendicular. She expended considerable sums in religious edifices at Mhysir, and built many temples†, Dhurrumsallas (or places of rest for travellers), and wells, throughout the Holkar posses-

* She placed water in her hand, and having mixed with it some leaves of the Toolsee tree while a Brahmin pronounced a prayer, she sprinkled the water over the treasure, which considered by this act devoted to charity.

† That at the village of Nimawur opposite Hindia, she erected, although small, is one of the most [illegible] buildings I have seen in this quarter of India.

sions in Malwa. But her munificence was not limited to her own territories; at all the principal places of Hindu pilgrimage, including as far East and West as Jaggernaut in Cuttack, and Dwaraca in Guzerat, and as far North as Kedarnath *, among the snowy mountains of Himalaya, and South as Ramiseram, near Cape Comorin, she built holy edifices, maintained establishments, and sent annual sums to be distributed in charity. Her principal structures are at Gyah, where a figure of herself adoring the image of Mahadeva is preserved in one of the temples; and she is sainted among her own tribe, by its having been placed near the statues of the god Ramchunder, and his wife, the goddess Seeta.

Besides the fixed yearly disbursements which Ahia Bhye sent to support her establishments at the holy shrines of India, proportional, but less sums, were remitted to other sanctuaries. In addition to this fixed charity, she occasionally bestowed other presents: and nothing added more to

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* Captain T. D. Stewart, one of my political assistants, when travelling to Kedarnath in 1818, had frequent opportunities of remarking the veneration in which the memory of Ahia Bhye is held in that remote part of India. There is an excellent stone Dhurrumsalla still in good repair, and a Coond, or reservoir of water, built at the expense of that princess, for the accommodation of pilgrims and travellers at the stage beyond Mundul, and about three thousand feet higher, where not a vestige of any other habitation is to be found.

her fame in the Southern regions of the peninsula, than the constant supply of Ganges water, which she was in the habit of sending to wash the sacred images of the different temples. These extensive and pious donations probably proceeded from a sincere belief in her religion, and a desire to promote her own and her country's welfare, by propitiating the favour of the deities she worshipped; but we find in many of her observances and institutions, a spirit of charity which had the truest character of wisdom and benevolence. She daily fed the poor; and on particular festivals gave entertainments to the lowest classes. During the hot months of the year persons were stationed on the roads to supply travellers with water; and at the commencement of the cold season she gave clothes to great numbers of her dependants, and to infirm people. Her feelings of general humanity were often carried to an extraordinary excess. The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the river shared in her compassion: portions of food were allotted to them, and the peasant near Mhysir used in hot days to see his yoke of oxen stopped during their labour to be refreshed with water brought by a servant of Ahia Bhye: while fields she had purchased were covered with flocks of birds, that had been justly, as Ahia Bhye used to observe, driven by cultivators from destroying the grain, on which the latter depended for their own sustenance.

We may smile at such universal sympathy, and perhaps censure the bigotry which bestowed on Brahmins the largest share of her charity, and wasted the treasures of a state in the erection and maintenance of edifices in distant lands: but it was well asked by an intelligent Brahmin*, (to whom this remark was addressed) "Whether Ala Bhye, by spending "double the money on an army that she did in "charity and good works, could have preserved "her country for above thirty years in a state of "profound peace, while she rendered her subjects "happy and herself adored? No person (he added) "doubts the sincerity of her piety; but if she had "merely possessed worldly wisdom, she could have "devised no means so admirably calculated to effect "the object. I was (this person concluded) in one "of the principal offices at Poona during the last "years of her administration, and know well "what feelings were excited by the mere mention "of her name. Among the princes of her own "nation, it would have been looked upon as sacri-"lege to have become her enemy, or, indeed, not "to have defended her against any hostile attempt. "She was considered by all in the same light. "The Nizam of the Deckan and Tippoo Sultan

* I quote here the precise words of the reply made to an observation of mine that expressed doubt of the wisdom of Ala Bhye's conduct.

"granted her the same respect as the Paishwah; "and Mahomedans joined with Hindus in prayers "for her long life and prosperity."

An event occurred in the latter years of Alia Bhye of too interesting and afflicting a nature to be passed over in silence. The melancholy death of her only son, Malee Row, has been noticed. She had, besides, one daughter, Muchta Bhye, who was married*, and had one son†, who, after reaching manhood, died at Mhysir. Twelve months afterwards his father died, and Muchta Bhye declared immediately her resolution to burn with the corpse of her husband. No efforts (short of coercion) that a mother and a sovereign could use were untried by the virtuous Alia Bhye to dissuade her daughter from the fatal resolution. She humbled herself to the dust before her, and entreated her, as she revered her God, not to leave her desolate and alone upon earth. Muchta Bhye, although affectionate, was calm and resolved. "You are old, mother, (she said) and a few years "will end your pious life. My only child and husband are gone, and when you follow, life, I feel, "will be insupportable; but the opportunity "of terminating it with honour will then have "passed." Alia Bhye, when she found all dissuasion unavailing, determined to witness the last

* Her husband's name was Jeswunt Row Pounseah.

† The child's name was Nutheabah.

dreadful scene. She walked in the procession and stood near the pile, where she was supported by two Brahmins, who held her arms. Although obviously suffering great agony of mind, she remained tolerably firm till the first blaze of the flame made her lose all self-command; and while her shrieks increased the noise made by the exulting shouts of the immense multitude that stood around, she was seen to gnaw in anguish those hands she could not liberate from the persons by whom she was held. After some convulsive efforts, she so far recovered as to join in the ceremony of bathing in the Nerbudda, when the bodies were consumed. She then retired to her palace, where for three days, having taken hardly any sustenance, she remained so absorbed in grief that she never uttered a word. When recovered from this state, she seemed to find consolation in building a beautiful monument* to the memory of those she lamented.

These particulars are related on the authority of several persons who were near witnesses of the affecting scene, besides that of Baramul Dada†,

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* There are few modern temples in India of more beautiful and finished workmanship than this monument of maternal love.

† I went to the spot where this affecting scene occurred, with the venerable Baramul Dada, and though much affected, he seemed to take a melancholy delight in shewing the

who was throughout in attendance on her. It is pleasing to find that her devotion, although it forbad her to infringe what usage had sanctioned and rendered holy, had not subdued in this admirable woman's mind the natural feelings of humanity.

A. D. 1795. Alia Bhye died at the age of sixty, worn out with care and fatigue; and, according to some, she hastened her death by a too strict observance of the numerous fasts prescribed by her religion. She was of middle stature, and very thin. Though at no period of her life handsome*, her complexion, which was of a dark olive, was clear; and her countenance is described as having been to the last hour of her existence agreeable, and expressive of that goodness which marked every action of her life. She was very cheerful, and seldom in anger; but, when provoked by wickedness or crime, the most esteemed of her attendants trembled† to

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spot where the pile was made, and that where his mistress stood to witness her daughter's sacrifice.

* When the beautiful but wicked Anuntia Bhye, wife of Ragobah, and mother of Bajerow, the ex-Paishwah, was at Dhar, envious, perhaps, of the fame of Alia Bhye, she sent a female attendant to bring an account of her looks. The woman is reported to have said on her return, "Alia Bhye has "not beautiful features, but a heaven, light is on her coun-"tenance."—"But she is not handsome, you say," was the only reply of her mistress, who felt consolation in this part of the report.

† Baramul Dada, the venerable manager of Mhysir, who

approach her. The mind of this extraordinary woman had been more cultivated than is usual with Hindus: she could read, and understood the Puranas, or sacred books, which were her favourite study. She is represented as having been singularly quick and clear in the transaction of public business. Her husband was killed before she was twenty years of age, and to that misfortune was added the vice and insanity of her son. These afflictions made a strong impression on her mind. After her husband's death she never wore coloured clothes*, nor any jewels except a small necklace; and, indeed, remained, amid every temptation, unchanged in her habits or character. Flattery even appears to have been lost upon Ahia Bhye. A Brahmin wrote a book in her praise, which she heard read with patience; but, after observing "she was a weak sinful woman, and not deserving such fine encomiums," she directed it to be thrown into the Nerbudda, and took no farther notice of the author†. The facts

was for many years one of her most favourite servants, assured me that when really in anger, which was of rare occurrence, her countenance struck terror into the minds of the boldest.

* She always dressed in plain white clothes, according to the usage of Hindu widows, without even an embroidered or coloured border.

† This anecdote was related to me by Baramul Dada, when sitting on the terrace of her palace at Mhysir, which overhangs the Nerbudda.

that have been stated of Alia Bhye rest on grounds that admit of no scepticism.* It is, however, an extraordinary picture:—a female without vanity, a bigot without intolerance†; a mind imbued with the deepest superstition, yet receiving no impressions except what promoted the happiness of those under its influence; a being exercising, in the most active and able manner, despotic power, not merely with sincere humility, but under the severest moral restraint that a strict conscience could impose on human action; and all this combined with the greatest indulgence for the weakness and faults of others. Such, at least, is the account which the natives of Malwa give of Alia Bhye: with them her name is sainted, and she is styled an Avatar, or incarnation of the divinity. In the most sober view that can be taken of her character, she certainly appears, within her limited sphere, to have been one of the purest and

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* Independently of the numerous and authentic sources from which these facts are drawn, my duty led to my making, in detail, settlements and agreements with the same classes; and the minute evidence I have obtained regarding the acts and measures of the internal administration of Alia Bhye places its real character beyond all doubt.

† Intolerance is not a defect of the Hindu religion; but Alia Bhye is represented to have gone farther, and to have been peculiarly kind and considerate to such of her subjects as differed from her in faith.

most exemplary rulers that ever existed; and she affords a striking example of the practical benefit a mind may receive from performing worldly duties under a deep sense of responsibility to its Creator.

The life of Alia Bhye has been given at greater length than was contemplated; but it forms too proud an epoch in the history of the house of Holkar to be slightly passed over. She left no heir to her fortune and power, and we now proceed to notice those destroyers, who came to ruin the fair prospects which her government had opened to the inhabitants of her dominions.

For nearly two years after the death of Alia Bhye, the territories of the Holkar family continued prosperous; but the death of Tukajee was followed by contests which led to their desolation. This chief left two sons, Casi Row and Mulhar Row, by his wife, and two, Jeswunt Row and Etojee, by a mistress. The pretensions of Casi Row were prior from birth, but he was weak in intellect, and deformed in body, and quite unequal to the active duties of the government. This made his father and Alia Bhye desire that he should remain at Mhysir; while Mulhar Row, a brave and aspiring youth, commanded the armies: in other words, that the latter should perform the duties of Tukajee, and his brother those of Alia Bhye. The belief of such a plan

being practicable, is a proof how easily the judgment may be blinded by affection: a day's union was not to be expected from the opposite character of the brothers; and from the moment of their father's death, they plotted each other's destruction. Mulhar Row had pressed his father, on the ground of his superior fitness, to name him his sole successor; and, offended at his non-compliance, had thrown himself on the protection of Nana Furnavese, who promised him assistance. The troops were also in his favour, and his prospect of attaining the sovereign power seemed certain; when Casi Row, then at Mhysir, entreated Dowlet Row Sindia, or rather his minister, the notorious Sirjee Row Ghatkia, to support his pretensions. This was promised, and on his arrival at Poona his cause was openly espoused. To prevent, however, the escape of his brother and a protracted warfare, a reconciliation was sought and concluded; but on the night of the day on which this was effected, and the ceremony of a sacred oath * had passed between them, the camp of Mulhar Row was surrounded by the

* The oath taken on this occasion was that of Bel-boondar, or "the pledge of the Bel," one of the most sacred a Hindu can take. The Bel-tree is rendered holy by its leaves being used in the worship of Mahadeva. When this oath is taken, some of its leaves are filled with turmeric, and interchanged with solemn pledges by the parties.

disciplined battalions of Sindia. The former was apprised, at daybreak, of his danger, and immediately mounted his horse; but before any defensive arrangements could be made, he was killed by a ball which pierced his forehead. The price of this infamous act of treachery was the restoration of the bonds* given by Madhajee Sindia to Alia Bhye and Hurka Bhye, and the payment of fifteen lacks of rupees†, ten of which were in ready money, while the revenue of Amber, in the Deckan, was mortgaged for the remainder.

The whole‡ of Holkar's troops, except a few followers of Casi Row, were dispersed, and their camp plundered. Among the fugitives was Jeswunt Row, who carried with him a few of the household horse, and, according to report, some of the family jewels. He sought protection at Nagpoor; but a belief of his possessing property, or a desire to conciliate the Poona government and Sindia§, made Ragojee Bhonslah seize and con-

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* I am assured of this fact by persons who, having been in the service of the Holkar family at the period, must have been informed of its correctness.

† This latter sum was demanded as payment for powder and shot expended on the occasion.

‡ The army of Holkar with Mulhar Row at Poona only amounted to three or four thousand men.

§ Both the ministers of the Paishwah and Dolwet Row

fine him. He remained in prison six months, when he made his escape, but was again taken; he, however, a second time eluded his guard, and arrived in Candeish, a year and a half after Mulhar Row was slain. He was accompanied, in this second flight, by a Mahomedan* soldier, and an active intelligent Hindu of the name of Bhowanee Shunkur †. When they reached Candeish, Jeswunt Row went to the village of Goorgaum to see his tutor Chimna Bhow, who gave him a mare ‡ and three hundred rupees, advising him not to remain there, but to proceed towards Malwa. He went first to the small fort of Kookernada, within six coss of Nimderbar; and we may judge of his low and desperate condition at this period, from his having

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Sindia addressed strong letters to Ragojee Bhonslah on this occasion.

* This man's name was Shah Mahomed; we hear no more of him, and he probably died soon, as Jeswunt Row was not ungrateful to the few friends who aided him in adversity.

† Bhowanee Shunkur was, when he attached himself to Jeswunt Row, a common writer to a party of ten horse, and rose to be Buckshee, or paymaster of his whole army. He will be noticed hereafter.

‡ The name of this mare was Lunka; she was of a chesnut colour, and became, though old and not handsome, a great favourite, and was celebrated by Jeswunt Row making her, on the Dusserah feast, his chief object of Poojah, or worship, and calling her the origin of his fortunes.

become for two or three months the associate of the Bheel chief who possessed the fastness to which he had fled *. From Kookernada, Jeswunt Row went first to Burwanee, and afterwards to Dhurrapooree, a town on the Nerbudda, belonging to the family of Puar, the chief of which, Anund Row, when he received intelligence of his arrival, sent directions for his being forwarded by the route of Mandoo to Dhar; he also sent a dress and a palankeen to meet him, and directed that all his wants should be liberally supplied. These extended, at this low ebb of his fortune, even to clothes to cover himself and his few followers.

Jeswunt Row remained two or three months at Dhar, where several of the old adherents of his family joined his standard: but they were, like himself, in a wretched state of poverty. Fortunately, at this period, Rung Row Ourekur, with a body of Patans and Pindarries, made an attack on Anund Row †. The Puar prince had actually commenced his retreat, and had abandoned two guns, when he was stopped by Jeswunt Row, who

* It was about this period that he must have learnt the fate of his brother Etojee, who, flying from Poona at the same time, had become the associate of freebooters, and was taken and trampled to death by an elephant in that city.

† This attack was made at Kirowul, in a village sixteen miles South-east of Dhar.

entreating him to stand his ground, promised that he would still win the victory for him. Taking a slip of paper, he wrote a short note addressed to the leaders of the Pindarries with Ourekur, stating that "Jeswunt Row Holkar was with the Puar, and de-"sired them as adherents of his family, to with-"draw." The Pindarries at first doubted the fact, but, when convinced of the truth by the messenger who carried it, they fell back and created a confusion, during which the guns were recovered. Jeswunt Row, springing from his horse, seized a spunge staff, and aided by some men, who were animated by his example, fired two or three rounds with good aim at the Afghans, who were again advancing to the attack; the consequence was their retreat from the field, and the precipitate flight of Ourekur.

The gratitude of Anund Row was commensurate with the service that had been rendered him; but Jeswunt Row asked nothing but a promise to give him refuge when in extreme distress. His having fled to Dhar was no sooner known than Sindia threatened Anund Row with his highest displeasure, if he were not seized or expelled; and it is related, that the generosity of Jeswunt Row would not permit him to be the ruin of his protector, which seemed certain if he protracted his stay. He solicited, and obtained, a small aid in money, and having received, besides ten thousand rupees, a

present of seven horses, he left Dhar with this number of mounted followers and seven more belonging to Shararow Madick, a Mahratta who had attached himself to his fortunes. To this train he added about one hundred and twenty ragged half-armed foot, composed of his adherents, who had been plundered at Poona of their horses and property. The first enterprise he attempted with this party was against one hundred of Casi Row's household troops at Debalpoor*, which by a rapid movement he completely surprised, and not only obtained some good horses by this success, but also a seasonable supply of money, which he extorted from the helpless inhabitants of the town. This enterprise may be deemed the commencement of the predatory career, which he appears, from the moment he returned to Malwa, to have considered the only means of preserving his own power, or rescuing the possessions of his family from Dowlet Row Sindia, in whose hands Casi Row was at this time a mere instrument. Jeswunt Row was not, however, inattentive to the feel-

* Debalpoor is a town belonging to the Holkar family, situated about four miles from the right bank of the Chumbul. The Chevalier Dudernaic, who had been encamped at it with the brigade he commanded in the service of Casi Row, marched for Indore, leaving the Pagah horse for the protection of Debalpoor.

jugs and pride of that family, of which he was an illegitimate branch, and he knew too well the strength he might gain or lose by consulting or neglecting the prejudices of the adherents and subjects of the house of Holkar, to venture on a direct usurpation of the chief authority; but, under the pretext of Casi Row's complete incapacity, from natural defects, mental and corporeal, he proclaimed his allegiance to Kundee Row, the infant son of Mulhar Row *, by having a Persian seal engraved, before he left Dhar, with the inscription "Jeswunt Row †, the subordinate of Sevai Kundee Row," and under this designation he began to collect an army, into which all classes, Pindarries, Bheels, Afghans, Mahrattas, and Rajpoots, were indiscriminately admitted. He had gone from Debalpoor to Jowrah, and thence to Mahidpoor; but the manager of the former ‡ desired to seize him, and the officer in charge of the latter refused him the slightest assistance. He then marched East towards Sarungpoor;

* This child was born some months after the death of his father.

† This Persian seal was "Jeswunt Row Peowee Sevai Kundee Row." On his Mahratta one was engraved "at the "feet of the husband of Mahalia, (i. e. Kundee Row, the "deity of Jejoory,) the son of Mulhar Row Kundee Row."

‡ Gungaram Koitaree, a Banyan, was at this time manager of Jowrah. He was an able man; and Jeswunt Row, when

and Vizier Hussein, a Seid of that town, who had been before in the service of the Holkar family, was the first man of respectability in Malwa who joined him. This leader added to the weight of his name, and the services of forty or fifty horse and two or three hundred foot, a present of five thousand rupees; and it was by his advice that Jeswunt Row made an overture to Ameer Khan, then encamped at Bhopal with fifteen hundred foot. The Mahomedan leader, having accepted the invitation, marched immediately to Shujahaipoor; and the first meeting of those two chiefs, since so celebrated in the annals of predatory warfare, took place at Ranagunje. The terms of their union were soon A. D. 1798. settled. Ameer Khan gave an engagement never to desert the fortunes of Jeswunt Row, and received a written promise to share equally in all future plunder and conquest. There could be little trouble in making an agreement between men whose fortunes were at the moment alike desperate, and neither of whom were restrained by any scruples, as to its future performance, likely to obstruct the promotion of their personal in-

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he came to power, after making his conduct on this occasion a pretence for exacting money, employed him in high situations. He was for nine or ten years manager of Rampoora and Berupoora, and several other districts. Mugnee Ram, the son of Gungaram Kottaree, is still in the service of the Holkar family.

terests. Their joint career commenced by a demand of contribution from the Aumil of Shujahalpoor; and that officer, who had a few days before insulted Jeswunt Row with an offer of two hundred rupees, was now compelled to pay seven thousand to purchase his absence, and that of his new ally. After marching from Shujahalpoor, Jeswunt Row plundered some merchants whose property, consisting of clothes to the amount of forty thousand rupees, furnished his new levies with pay, and brought thousands of recruits to his standard.

A. D. 1798. His next exploit was to pillage some towns and districts belonging to Dowlet Row Sindia, on the Nerbudda. From Hindia, which he sacked, he marched to the village of Kusrawud opposite Mundlasir, where he had an action with a strong detachment of the Campoo, or brigade, of the Chevalier Dudernaic, (then in the service of Casi Row,) which had been sent from that officer's head-quarters at Indore to attack him. Jeswunt Row was victorious, after a severe contest; the detachment was destroyed, and eight standards and four guns, which fell into the hands of the conqueror, greatly increased both his means and reputation. He marched immediately to Mhysir; but he was soon driven thence, and fled to Suttwass, where he took seven guns, which he repaired and carried along with him to Burgon-

dah*, with the intention of inviting to his standard the troops of Casi Row, then assembled at Indore. The latter, who were disgusted with acting for a prince whose power was merely nominal, saw, in the enterprising and daring spirit of Jeswunt Row, a chief better calculated to preserve the family they adhered to, from the unprincipled ambition of Sindia. The consequence of this feeling was, that the Chevalier Dudernaic with his battalions, and Nujeeb Khan, who was attached to them with eight hundred horse, joined Jeswunt Row, and before the year was completed, the fugitive, who had fled from Poona unattended, was at the head of a considerable army, and obeyed as the guardian of the interests of their young prince by the inhabitants of all the Holkar territories in Central India.

Jeswunt Row, after settling with the disciplined brigades, proceeded to Mhysir, where great pains were taken to discover the treasures of Alia Bhye, and a considerable amount both of money and jewels is reported to have come into his hands. Thus far is certain: he immediately commenced issues of pay, and published his intention of estab-

* The village of Burgondah is six miles South-west of the cantonment at Mhow, and nineteen, in nearly the same direction, from Indore. It is in the road from the latter to Mhysir by the Jaum Ghaut.

lishing order and regularity in his army * and government. After remaining about three months at Mhysir, Jeswunt Row returned to his cantonment at Burgondah, where he was detained longer than he had proposed by the bursting of a musquet, which he was firing at a mark: from which accident he lost the sight of one of his eyes. He bestowed at this time the title of Nabob upon his associate Ameer Khan, to whom he gave a magnificent present † on the occasion;

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* Jeswunt Row Holkar, on this occasion, divided his horse into three classes. To the first-sized horses he gave five hundred rupees per annum; to the second, three hundred; and to the third, two hundred and fifty. Officers had higher allowances; twenty days' pay only was given each month, and the arrears settled every year. In all these arrangements there was a remarkable distinction between the Mahomedans and Hindus. The former had the pay above stated, while the latter had only for first horses four hundred, for the second two hundred, and for the third one hundred and fifty. I have asked the reason of this distinction: some referred it to the influence of Ameer Khan and the Mahomedan Sirdars, others to the Patans and their horses being stronger and requiring more food; others to the Mahrattas having more latitude for plunder. But the real cause appears to have been a desire to accommodate the loose habits of his Mahratta followers, who had a greater number of ponies, upon which their women, children, and servants rode, registered in their parties, and whose Sherah, or average pay, though nominally lower, became, from the indulgence that was extended to them on all such points, actually higher.

† An elephant, horse, rich dress, and jewels.

and the Patan chief flattered his vanity by styling himself on his seal "Pedwee, or the subordinate, of Jeswunt Row Holkar." The new Nabob was detached with a strong corps, in an Eastern direction, to plunder and levy contributions. The Rajas of Dewass were compelled to pay one lack of rupees, and a large sum was also exacted from Aggur, which was afterwards plundered. Ameer Khan next marched to Bersiah, Sc- A. D. 1799.
ronje, and Saugor, laying waste the country as he went, particularly at the latter place, where his army acquired an enormous booty. Saugor, which then belonged to the Paishwah, after being defended for several days by Venaick Row, was at last taken by storm; and it is stated, in an account given by one* who was then in the service of Ameer Khan, that a scene of promiscuous and unrestrained pillage continued for the whole period (almost a month) that the army remained near this unfortunate city. We learn from the same authority, that Saugor had been set on fire the day of the storm, and the flames continued to rage in one quarter or another of the town throughout the whole period. Only about four or five hundred of the garrison and inhabitants were killed, but all were ruined; for no property was spared, and the

* Khealee Ram, the nephew of Himut Rai, who was with his father and brothers in the service of Ameer Khan.

last days were employed in dragging the tanks and wells, to obtain what had been cast into them for the purpose of temporary concealment. Ameer Khan is represented to have made repeated efforts to stop the excesses of his troops, which were attended with great loss of reputation as well as of property to himself; but he was the mere leader of a rabble who despised his orders, and nothing could exceed the insubordination and insolence of the Patans, of whom the army almost wholly consisted. When their commander attempted to stop them, they derided him with his former low condition, asking him if he had forgotten who made him a great man, and warning him to beware how he provoked a resentment which would reduce him in a moment to his original insignificance. He supported their insolence, according to the narrator of these facts, with a patience little honourable to his character, using no means but the ineffectual one of soothing entreaties to recall them to their duty. Every species of insult and torture was inflicted upon the male and female inhabitants of Saugor. The Afghan soldiers, when they caught a Brahmin or Hindu of high cast, used to feel his head, and examine the skin with great care, to discover by its softness and delicacy, whether he had been leading a luxurious life or one of labour, and, according to the result of this inspection, they liberated their prisoner, or proceeded to extremities with him.

The consequences of the transactions at Saugor were such as might have been expected. The army of Ameer Khan, which was before disorderly, became wholly unmanageable. Those who had acquired booty, had no thoughts but how to preserve it; while others, who had been less fortunate, were clamorous and discontented. Venaick Row had applied to the Raja of Nagpoor; and Beni Singh *, one of the favourite leaders of that prince, being sent to his aid, made such rapid marches, that Ameer Khan did not hear of his approach till he was within a few miles of Saugor. He instantly mounted his horse, and directed his army to attend him. Two or three thousand men listened to his orders, but the remainder either openly disobeyed them, on the plea of not having received pay, or evaded immediate compliance by promising to follow as soon as they were ready; and several of the principal Afghans † who had enriched themselves with plunder, the moment their chief was out of camp, actually marched in an opposite direction to Ruthgur, a fort about twenty-five

* This chief was afterwards slain at Gawilghur, when that fortress was taken by the present Duke of Wellington in 1803. He fell during the storm, and left the character of a brave soldier.

† The names of the leaders who acted in this disgraceful manner were, Akber Khan, Hinut Khan, Doran Shan, and Nadir Khan.

miles distant, belonging to the Nabob of Bhopal. Their base example was followed by many. Ameer Khan, not aware of this defection, continued to advance with a small body of troops, relying on the support of the remainder. He made an attack upon the Nagpoor force, in which he was thrown from his horse, and, though he was soon remounted, one of his officers, who saw him fall, giving up all for lost, galloped back to the lines near Saugor. All hurried to enquire what had occurred, and what Ameer Khan was doing. He was too much alarmed to answer, and could only motion with both his hands*, to pack up and be off. This signal was well obeyed; in a few minutes the camp was standing (Bazars and all) without one inhabitant, in which state Ameer Khan found it when he returned, half an hour before dark, after an indecisive action, which it was his intention to have renewed next day. His astonishment cannot be described; but, unacquainted with any thing except the direction in which his army had fled, he could not venture, with the few that remained, to pass the night so near an enemy, who must soon have information of what had occurred. He therefore directed his camp,

* Khealee Ram states in his account, that he was the first person who interrogated this alarmed fugitive, but could only obtain in answer the described signal for flight.

with all it contained, to be set on fire, and proceeded towards Rathgur, where he not only found the fugitives, but also his brother Kurreem u Deen, who had been sent by Jeswunt Row with a strong reinforcement to his support. The mutual reproaches of the different parties were silenced for three or four days by their deplorable condition: Ameer Khan himself had neither a tent to shelter him, nor a suit of clothes besides those he wore. A small present from the governor* of Rathgur, and the plunder of its principal banker†, relieved their wants for the moment; and Kurreem u Deen, after upbraiding his brother for mismanaging the expedition which Jeswunt Row Holkar had

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* Mahomed Khan, son of Moorid Mahomed Khan, was at this time governor of Rathgur. He made his unwelcome guests a present of five thousand rupees.

† Mohun Lal, the nephew of Dal Chund, a Soucar of reputation, concealed at Rathgur, was discovered by Ameer Khan, and demanded of the governor, who gave him up. He promised to pay five thousand rupees, and was given over to Khealee Ram to realize the money. After paying about one thousand he begged to go into his house to bring the rest, and contrived to make his escape by a window in the roof. This produced rage and alarm in the person who had charge of him, who, not finding him, proceeded to his Doucan, or shop, which (I use his own expression) was swept, and by this means Ameer Khan obtained full forty thousand rupees.

confided to him, proposed that he should in part indemnify his late losses by forcing the commanders who had deserted him to refund part of the booty which had occasioned their misconduct. Ameer Khan agreed to make the demand; but the Afghan chiefs, enraged at the proposal, forsook the camp on the following day. Kurreem u Deen having resolved that they should not so easily escape, pursued them with his own detachment, and, coming up with them at the village of Kuroaee, completely surrounded them. For three days nothing decisive occurred. On the fourth morning, their camp was attacked, and after a short contest they were defeated, and fled in every direction. Akber Khan, the principal of the malcontents, was slain, and his head, together with the whole plunder retaken, was sent to Ameer Khan. Kurreem u Deen gave, in the manner in which he performed this service with a corps almost entirely composed of Pindarries, a very useful lesson to his elder brother, of the advantage of enforcing obedience;—but this young chief was every way superior to Ameer Khan, and the favour and confidence with which Jeswunt Row treated him is a proof of the latter's sagacity. He did not, however, live long to enjoy the high character he had acquired. He was killed in attacking Shujahalpoor, and his death, and the pillage of that place, which was completely sacked, enraged Jeswunt Row even more than he

had been with the conduct of Ameer Khan at Saugor; and, receiving information that he cherished intentions hostile to his government, he sent Shamrow Madik with a strong corps to seize him. Ameer Khan, alarmed at this proceeding, sent one of his most confidential officers * to Indore, charged with professions of obedience and attachment; but Jeswunt Row demanded, as a proof of his sincerity, that he should come alone to his camp. Ameer Khan, in whose character art predominated, and who always strove to gain his ends by pliancy rather than firmness, did not hesitate to comply with the request. He went with only one hundred horse to the camp of Shamrow, whom he accompanied to Indore, and immediately waited on Jeswunt Row, before whom he laid his sword and shield, with this observation, "You have listened to "calumniators: I present you with my arms, which "never can be used but in your service." These concessions did not immediately appease the anger, or allay the jealousy, of the Mahratta chief; but Ameer Khan, resolving to obtain his confidence, went one morning to see him without a single attendant, and presenting his dagger said, "You "had better, if your doubts still continue, end "them by taking my life. I shall be satisfied, if

* Himut Row.

"you are convinced it is for the good of your "state." Jeswunt Row immediately embraced him, declaring he was ashamed of ever having suspected for a moment so good and so attached a friend.

All these events succeeded each other so quickly, that before Dowlet Row Sindia could collect an army to protect his possessions in Malwa, they were half ruined. The repose that province had enjoyed for more than thirty years had left its inhabitants ill prepared for the storm which now burst over them; the spirit of rapine was let loose, and acts of treachery and violence generated each other so rapidly, that within a few months every district was a prey to anarchy and oppression.

A. D. 1799. The approach of Sindia obliged Holkar to collect his troops, now amounting to between sixty and seventy thousand *. The first small detachments sent by Sindia into Malwa were defeated, but Jeswunt Row sustained a serious reverse at Suwass, whence he retired upon Indore. After halting there a few days he marched to Sarungpoor, where he was joined by Ameer

* The details already given will shew how Jeswunt Row's army was composed: among others many Pindarries had joined his standard; but with the exception of the parties of Kundur Buksh, Tukoo, and Sahib Khan, almost all the chiefs of that class of plunderers attached themselves to Sindia when he moved towards Malwa.

Khan. Although it was the height of the rains, they determined to attack a division of Sindia's army, consisting of a corps of eight battalions, and above twenty guns, at Oojein. Skirmishing commenced the day they arrived near that city, but it was eight days before a decisive action took place. This was hard fought, and only won by the courage and talent of Jeswunt Row, who, while he gave orders for a desperate charge on the enemy's front, directed Ameer Khan with a large body of horse, to turn their flank unseen under cover of a deep watercourse; and these troops coming from the circuit they had made in the direction of Oojein, which protected the rear of Sindia's brigades, were at first view hailed as friends, and had charged before the mistake was discovered. Never was defeat more complete; the battalions are represented to have been completely annihilated. We receive a strong impression of the order Jeswunt Row had established, and the vigour of his character, from the fact that Oojein was not plundered after this success; but he reserved it from his troops to exact a heavy contribution himself from its wealthy inhabitants, who were fined in proportion to their real or supposed wealth. It is a curious coincidence, that, on this occasion, nearly the same mode of extortion was pursued by Jeswunt Row as had been adopted by that great prototype of plunderers, Nadir

Shah, at Delhi; and, in both cases, many of the base and sordid citizens rented from the conqueror the right of exacting, from the different wards * of the city, whatever they could obtain in money or goods.

This defeat of Sindia's battalions and capture of his capital were soon cruelly revenged. After the rains were over, Sindia detached Sirjee Row Ghatkia with a strong corps to attack Indore. Holkar hastened from Oojein to its relief. He appears on this occasion to have underrated his enemy; for, though there is reason to believe the Chevalier Dudernaic would not have obeyed his orders, there can be no doubt that the officer who had conquered for him at Oojein, and was then at Jowrah with all his brigade, would have attended his summons; but Jeswunt Row, thinking his light troops sufficient for the service, carried only a division of infantry, in which there was not one European officer. He however brought with him all the guns he had taken at Oojein, which amounted to nearly three hundred.

Jeswunt Row reached Indore some days before Ghatkia. The latter encamped near Beejulpoor, a village three miles South of the city.

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* Mahal, or ward of an Indian town, is regulated, with a view to its police, in a manner very similar to what it is in Europe.

close to which Jeswunt Row had taken post. For nine or ten days there was a continued skirmishing and cannonading between the armies, when Jeswunt Row determined on an attack, and for this purpose directed Ameer Khan and Bhowanee Shunker (already Bukseé, or paymaster of the army,) to move at night, and instructed them to make a circuit with ten or twelve thousand men, so as to gain, in the early part of the ensuing day, the high ground in the enemy's rear, when a gun was to be the signal for a simultaneous charge. This arrangement had the fate of many similar ones in better-ordered armies. Before the troops detached to fall upon the rear arrived, the insolence of Ghatkia's Pindarries provoked a retaliation on the part of Jeswunt Row's Mahomedan horse; the Pindarries fled, and Ghatkia's Mahrattas, who came to their support, followed their example; the panic spread, and part of Sindia's infantry had actually abandoned their guns, and thrown down their arms, when Jeswunt Row, whose efforts to restrain this attack were not effectual, lost a victory by not prosecuting his success. He remained for a moment undecided; and before he saw his error, the infantry of Sindia recovering from its alarm, and observing only two or three hundred horse, rallied and repulsed them. Jeswunt Row made repeated attempts, but in vain.

to throw them again into confusion. About this period Ameer Khan and Bhowanee Shunker reached their destination; but, instead of a signal gun and a combined attack, they found Jeswunt half defeated, and the day far advanced. The action was in favour of Sindia's troops, and many parties of Holkar's took shelter in the town; while, at the same critical moment, some leaders* gave orders to load their cattle. This completed the impression of defeat among the followers of Jeswunt Row, who, before it was dark, commenced their flight. The Pindarries, who always watch this part of an army, were instantly among the baggage, and the confusion soon became irretrievable. Jeswunt Row, seeing that all was lost, fled with his horse and a few infantry to Jaum, leaving his guns, camp, and capital to the enemy.

The loss of the battle of Indore has been variously ascribed—to the bad conduct of the infantry; to the treachery of the artillery, which had been recruited from Sindia's broken corps at Oojein; and to Ameer Khan, who, after his horse was killed, is accused of having set a bad example, by seeking the shelter of some trees; but though enough has been said to account for defeat, it may

* Dheema Kour and Hurnaut Dada, two favourites of Jeswunt Row, are accused of having first given this imprudent order for marching.

be added, that the confusion was, from the first, greatly increased by the vicinity of the capital, and Jeswunt Row was blamed by all for selecting so disadvantageous a military position.

The atrocities of Sirjee Row Ghatkia at Indore have been before noticed: they far exceeded those perpetrated by the army of Ameer Khan at Saugor. There was also this difference:—the Mahomedan chief, although deficient in authority, and perhaps energy, at least evinced an inclination to put a stop to the outrages of his lawless adherents; while Sirjee Row is stated by all to have enjoyed the scene, and to have encouraged the Pindarries to acts of atrocity novel even to that barbarous race. There is no reason to suspect exaggeration in the statements, which represent the wells within the limits of Indore as filled by bodies of unfortunate females, who by a voluntary death escaped the disgrace and cruelty to which they were for more than fifteen days exposed. The slaughter or flight of almost every inhabitant, and the demolition of every house, alone terminated this scene of plunder, massacre, and destruction. Between four and five thousand persons are said to have perished, and the remainder who fled saved no property.

While his enemies glutted themselves with the plunder of his capital, Jeswunt Row remained shut up at Jaum, a strong position on the verge of the

Vindhya range, defended by a fortress; but as the Pindarries came every day to within a mile or two of his camp, his supplies began to fail, and the army, without food or pay, were with difficulty kept together from day to day by the earnest exhortations of their leader, who promised that means should be early devised to improve their condition. The extremity to which he was at this moment reduced, may be conjectured from the measure to which he resorted. He obtained from his chiefs a promise of stilling the clamours of their followers for eight days (the time he required), on his giving to each horseman a piece of gold bullion, to the value of five rupees, which was obtained from breaking up all the ornaments, even to the female trinkets, found in the treasury of Alia Bhye. After this he sent the little baggage he possessed to Mhysr; and with only men and horses, making a rapid march of seventy-eight miles in one day to the wealthy town of Rutlam, he completely plundered it. He told his followers when he reached Rutlam, that he had fulfilled his promise, and that they were at liberty to help themselves. This feast (for it was literally such to his hungry soldiers) lasted thirteen days, during which man and animal fed to surfeit. He marched back to Mhysr with an army loaded as heavily with booty as their horses could bear; and on his arrival there, he plainly informed his adherents, that

his means of giving them regular pay were at an end, but that he was ready to lead those who were willing to follow his fortunes to plunder.* This promise, we are assured, was received by all ranks with delight.

Dowlet Row Sindia, finding that he could not promote his interest by associating them with the cause of Casi Row, desired that prince to leave his camp and proceed to Mhysir, where he arrived two days after Jeswunt Row's return, by whom he was kindly and honourably treated, but admitted to no participation, either nominal or real, in the administration of affairs. When Casi Row was one day boasting † of his influence in the councils of Dowlet Row Sindia, he proposed to Jeswunt Row to effect a reconciliation between him and that prince. "Hold your "tongue," said the former with impatience: "Had God, in mercy to the house of Hol-"kar, ordained you to be a female, you would

* This fact proves that he had expended whatever supply of money (which is said not to have exceeded twenty or thirty lacks of rupees) he found in the treasury of Alia Mhye; for he gave up to this period all those arrangements he had made for giving his army regular pay, when that first came into his possession, and now publicly proclaimed himself without any resource but plunder.

† I heard this anecdote from a very respectable person, who was present when the conversation occurred; and have since had it confirmed by others.

"have benefited another family by bearing chil-
"dren; but you have the name of a man, and
"have been, in consequence, the ruin of your
"own."

Sindia had done more than desire Cast Row to go to Mhysir. He had some time before offered to release the son of Mulhar Row, and with him all the Holkar possessions, if Jeswunt Row would cease from farther devastation of his provinces: but the latter, although he had originally made no other demand than what Dowlet Row was now willing to concede, had already gone too far as a freebooter to be able to stop with safety. We must refer to this feeling, his insisting upon cessions of some territories which had not been in possession of the Holkar family, since the days of the first Mulhar Row. On this being refused, he prepared to carry on the war on a more extended
A. D. 1801. scale. He sent Futty Singh Mania, accompanied by two chiefs of the Patan tribe of Bungush, to plunder the territories of Sindia and the Paishwah in the Deckan; while he himself marched to the Northward, levying heavy fines as he went along on all the principal towns*. He also, at the commencement of this expedition, obliged Zalim Singh of Kotah (to which city he marched) to pay

* Nolye, Katchrode, and Mundissoor, with all their dependent villages, had to pay large sums for exemption from destruction.

him seven lacks of rupees to save his country from desolation. Jeswunt Row was joined at this period by all his infantry brigades, in which, however, a considerable change had taken place. The Chevalier Dudernaic, who had either taken alarm for his personal safety, or entered into a correspondence with his countrymen in the service of Sindia, kept aloof at Rampoora *. Jeswunt Row sent Shamrow Madik, to give him assurance of good treatment. The latter, finding he could not persuade Dudernaic, prevailed upon his corps, by a promise of paying their arrears, to leave that officer †, and

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* Rampoora on the Chumbul, and the territory near it, had been granted to Dudernaic, as Jaidad, or temporary assignment for the payment of his troops.

† Dudernaic, though he resided himself at Rampoora, kept his family and property under the protection of Zalim Singh. When he found his men seduced from their obedience by Shamrow Madik, he went with two hundred horse to Kotah, and surrounding the house in which Shamrow dwelt, entered it himself, and threatened to put him to death. Zalim Singh, aware of the bad consequences to himself if a favourite chief of Jeswunt Row suffered injury within his territories, hastened to the house, where he found the parties in violent altercation. It terminated by his separating them and putting restraint on Dudernaic. Jeswunt Row demanded he should be given up, but this Zalim Singh refused to comply with, the act, he said, would stain his name with infamy. A small sum was paid to obtain Jeswunt Row's permission for his French commandant to depart; and the Chevalier proceeded to Hindustan with all his property, escorted by a party from the Regent of Kotah.

join his army which had now arrived at Jawud: whence all the infantry, except one battalion with its four guns, were detached to Mhysir, while the horse commenced plundering the districts of Rajpootana under Jeswunt Row, who had proceeded as far North as Tonk, when the arrival of a corps, which Sindia had detached in pursuit, made him move in a Westerly direction. He was likewise induced, by reports of the riches of Nath Dora in Mewar, to make rapid marches, in hopes of relieving the wants of his army, by plundering the treasures and jewels with which the liberal piety of Hindus had ornamented its shrines. The Mahratta soldiers had sometimes shewn a regard to religious feelings, even when opposed to their interests; but Jeswunt Row derided the scruples of his countrymen on such points. The idol Natjee had been carried away on his approach, with his jewels to the amount of four or five lacks of rupees; and it was probably from their having thus effected their escape, that he assumed a tone of moderation; for two years afterwards he plundered the same sacred shrine, and jestingly called the booty he seized, the holy present* of a divine being, who condescended to favour him. Such sacrilegious wit endeared him to the Patans, who predominated in his army, and whom he always

* The term used is Purshad, which denotes food from a divinity.

particularly courted; but the Hindus of his army were shocked, and some of them still believe that his insanity had commenced before he committed this crime—while others refer the miserable close of his life to the offence he gave by its perpetration to a principal divinity.

After ravaging a great part of Mewar, Jeswunt Row retired to Rampoora on the Chumbul; and while his army remained in that quarter, he is believed to have discovered considerable treasures which had been concealed in the neighbouring fort of Hinglaisghur. He proceeded from Rampoora to Amjherra, which he plundered and burnt, being provoked by the spirited but ineffectual resistance of its Raja. He next passed the Nerbudda, and fell upon Sindia's districts in Nemaur, which he laid completely waste. Cundwa, at that time an opulent town, was reduced to ashes, and heavy contributions were levied on Berhampoor, where he was joined by his infantry, with which and a few horse he proceeded to collect money in Candeish, while Ameer Khan and other chiefs were detached in various directions, to support their followers by plundering* the dominions of the Paishwah and the Nizam.

* Heavy contributions were levied on Malligaum, Toka, Kygaum, Para, Sunjun, and Jaulnah; and many other towns near these were plundered. Amber, of which Sindia had held possession since the death of Mulhar Row, surrendered,

It would be useless to dwell on the scenes of pillage and cruelty which marked the progress of Jeswunt Row's army to Poona. The alarm caused by his advance towards that capital led Dowlet Row Sindia to detach a force to the support of the Paishwah. A partial affair took place as this corps passed Jeswunt Row's army, in which Ameer Khan gained an advantage over two of Sindia's regular battalions; but the latter proceeded without farther molestation to their place of destination.

A.D. 1802. The battle which was fought near Poona on the twenty-fifth of October, between the army of Jeswunt Row and the combined troops of Bajerow and Sindia, has already been noticed. Jeswunt Row, after drawing out his army opposite to his enemies, with the cavalry in the rear and flanks of the infantry, dismounted, and stood upon an eminence,

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after three days' opposition, to Ameer Khan, and that chief is stated to have been very anxious to save it from pillage; but his utmost efforts were unavailing. From thence, he moved to Vinchoor; with the Jaghiredar of which he fought an action, that terminated in the complete rout of the latter, and the consequent plunder and destruction of the town by the Patans. Ameer Khan after these exploits joined Jeswunt Row at Fultimba, which he expressed an anxious desire to plunder; and though Jeswunt Row is stated to have shewn some reluctance to allow this sacred place to be injured, he at last gave his consent to a contribution of fifteen thousand rupees being levied; and treble that sum was extorted from the inhabitants.

that he might have a clear view of the whole action. According to the statement of some of his confidential officers, he cherished hopes, even at this moment, of bringing matters to an amicable adjustment with the Paishwah; but these, if really* entertained, were soon dissipated.

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* Whatever might have been the professions of Jeswunt Row, there were too strong feelings of hatred between them for him seriously to have anticipated Bajerow's consent to any union, except in the last extremity. Etojee, the brother of Jeswunt Row, had fled, at the same time he did, from Poona. His necessities had compelled him to adopt the life of a common plunderer. He was taken, and trampled to death by an elephant. It was true, he had committed a crime that merited death; but he was the son of Tukajee Holkar, and amongst the Mahrattas it was deemed an outrage to execute him like a common malefactor. This act of Bajerow, and the confinement of Kundee Row, were always pleaded by Jeswunt Row as his excuse for the life of violence and crime he subsequently led, and in which he had gone so far, that he could neither forgive, nor hope to be forgiven. Besides this, the horde of plunderers he had collected impelled him forward. He had no regular resources to pay them, and they were to be fed from day to day by the plunder of the country in which they acted. Jeswunt Row had, with no greater sincerity than he professed attachment to Bajerow, courted the amicable interposition of the British government; but authentic documents prove that from the commencement of his career he was hostile to its policy, from a knowledge that it was directed to the suppression of that predatory system, upon which his existence and the attachment of his followers depended.

His enemies commenced the action, and were successful in forcing a body of his horse to retreat. Jeswunt Row, the instant he observed this retrograde movement, sprang upon his horse, and addressing a small party of his men, advised all who did not intend to die or conquer, to save themselves, and return to their wives and children. "As for me (he exclaimed) I have no "intention of surviving this day; if I do not gain "the victory, where can I fly?" This proclamation of his resolution was well seconded by his actions. He hastened to his regular infantry, which, commanded by an English* officer, were continuing the fight, and, having met his flying horse, by his reproaches and example he succeeded in rallying them. The panic now ceased, and a complete victory was the reward of his efforts. A considerable number of the enemy was killed and wounded: their camp was plundered, and Poona was only saved from the same fate by the desire of the conqueror to reserve this prize for himself. The Patans of Ameer Khân, who had been the first to turn their backs at the commencement of the day, were now the most forward to plunder; they had reached the skirts of the city, and begun the

* Captain Harding, a very gallant young adventurer, who had been a short time in his service. This officer was killed, and his loss was much regretted by Jeswunt Row.

work of pillage and massacre, when Jeswunt Row ordered some of his own guns to play upon them. It was the only order the Patans would have obeyed; but they did not wholly desist, till a party of them trying to force the safeguards that were sent to protect the place, Jeswunt Row, wounded as he was, galloped to the spot, and slew two or three of them with his spear. He on this occasion, as at Oojein, displayed a remarkable degree of personal energy. His associate, Ameer Khan, had not been so distinguished: and when he came to congratulate Jeswunt Row (who was tying up his wounds) on the happy result of the action, the latter said smiling, "You have been "lucky to escape, brother." "I have indeed," was the grave reply; "for see here, the top * ornament "of my bridle is broken with a cannon-ball." "Well, you are a most fortunate fellow," said the malicious Mahratta, bursting into a loud laugh, with marked incredulity as to the cause of the accident, "for I observe the shot has touched neither of "your horse's ears, though the wounded ornament "was betwixt them." The person who related this characteristic conversation added, that the Patan chief looked vexed and abashed by this coarse but severe piece of wit.

* The top ornament, or Khulgee, of the bridle of a man of rank is usually of silver with a feather, and stands on the head-stall between the horse's ears.

Jeswunt Row, after this victory, waited fifteen days, till the arrival of Amrut Row* (with whom he had before intrigued) enabled him to proceed, without violating national prejudices, in his efforts to give stability to his power. On the ground that Bajerow, by flying from his capital, had virtually abdicated, Amrut Row assumed the functions, without taking the name of Paishwah. The British resident† at Poona was treated with great distinction, and every endeavour was made to reconcile him to the new government; but, finding that impossible, passports for his proceeding towards Bombay were reluctantly granted.

For two months no violent outrage was committed on the inhabitants of Poona. The revenue collected during that period, was obtained in a manner which excited no serious alarm; but the preparations of the British government accelerated a crisis unfavourable to the plans of Amrut Row, who, no doubt, had entered into the views of Jeswunt Row, in the hopes of being kept in the office of Dewan, or minister, of the Poona state, which, through life, had been the grand object of his ambition. But the flight of Bajerow, and his treaty with the

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* The adopted son of the Paishwah's father, and thence always styled his brother.

† The late Sir Barry Close.

British government, disappointed all such expectations, and left Amrut Row without the power of fulfilling the promises he had made to his protector. The latter, however, insisted upon a large sum of money, to satisfy the immediate wants of his army. This could only be obtained by the plunder of Poona, and that act of rapacity was now determined on. Every house of decent appearance was entered, and guards placed over it. Every inhabitant who had the reputation of possessing property, was seized and tortured till he paid the sum demanded, and troops were placed in every direction to prevent their escape. The booty obtained was very considerable: and Jeswunt Row, after paying a great part of the arrears of his army, marched with a large sum in his treasury towards Central India.

Dowlet Row Sindia had remained, during the whole of these transactions, encamped near Berhampoor, occupied in preparations for the war, which, in conjunction with Ragojee Bhonslah, he A. D. 1803. now meditated against the British government. It appeared to the confederates of the utmost importance to secure the aid of Jeswunt Row; and a treaty was signed, by which the promise of his co-operation * was obtained by a cession of

* This promise of Jeswunt Row to join the confederacy against the British government, was distinctly admitted by the

all the countries that had formerly belonged to the Holkar family, and the release * of Kundee Row, and Beemah Bhye, Jeswunt Row's daughter.

Dowlet Row Sindia, when he sent him his nephew and daughter, wrote to Jeswunt Row, then at Mhysir, that as the war would instantly commence, he hoped he would despatch a part of his army to the Deckan. Jeswunt Row's first resolution was to comply with his request, and the whole of Ameer Khan's troops actually crossed the Nerbudda, then swelled by the rains (it was the middle of the monsoon); but having himself embarked in one of the last boats with Ameer Khan, some conversation ensued between them, of which nothing farther has ever transpired, except that it was followed by a complete change of measures; for next day the Patan army began to recross. Jeswunt Row is understood to have written a long letter to Dowlet Row Sindia, in excuse for this conduct, which he attributed to the want of money to pay his followers; and he at the same time recommended him to send his

officers of Dowlet Row Sindia, who negotiated the treaty of Surjee Aujenghaum.

* Both these children had been made prisoners by Dowlet Row Sindia when he slew Mulhar Row at Poona. They had been for some time confined in Asseerghur, whence they were now sent to Jeswunt Row's camp.

infantry, guns, baggage, and family to Malwa, and carry on a predatory war against the British, observing, that if he attempted to fight like a sovereign*, or, in other words, with a regular army, he would be defeated,—if like a Mahratta, he would be successful. Sindia could not be expected to pay much attention to the advice of one whose first act exposed his perfidy, and who, the moment he observed his armies fully occupied in Hindustan and the Deckan, took advantage of the defenceless condition of his provinces in Central India, to ransack and destroy them,—while Ameer Khan was pillaging the more Eastern districts of Ashta, Shujahalpoor, and Omutwarra. Jeswunt Row, after passing the rainy season at Indore, went to the vicinity of Bampoora, where he continued for a short time on the banks of the Chumbul, and then moved to the frontier of the Jeypoor countries, indiscriminately plundering and exacting from the districts his armies overran. Sindia soon after made peace with the British government, but the great losses he had sustained, and the irritation which arose from some disputed articles of the treaty, led to his again

* All the papers of the Holkar family are lost. I state this fact on the authority of several persons who from their situation at the period were likely to be correctly informed of what passed.

A.D. 1804. entering into a negotiation with Jeswunt Row. This was conducted by Ambajee Inglia, through whom Sindia is represented to have stated that he had been betrayed by Ragojee Bhonslah, deceived by his ministers, deserted by his army, and that he saw no hope for the Mahratta cause, but in the energy and courage of Jeswunt Row. The latter answered, that he had foreseen the result of that description of war which Sindia attempted to carry on against the British, but his advice had been despised. He was, he said, nevertheless ready to make one effort more against that nation, provided Dowlet Row would send him such a supply of money as would enable him to put his troops in motion. He received an answer through Ambajee, that Sindia* had no treasure to send him, but he was at liberty to levy contributions from his principal towns. This latitude was gladly accepted; and while Ameer Khan was instructed to supply his wants (which he did most

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* It is to be regretted that the correspondence of this period was burnt, with all the papers of the Holkar family, by a dreadful fire which occurred nine years ago at the cantonment of Kotalah, near Bampoora. Hardly any thing was saved on this occasion from the flames. I write what is here stated on the verbal communications of two respectable persons, one of whom was at the court of Holkar, the other confidentially employed with Ameer Khan, to whom the progress and result of this negotiation was regularly transmitted.

amply) from Bhilsah and the Western parts of Bundelcund, Jeswunt Row marched to Mundissoor. This city was not only the capital of a province, but also a great emporium of commerce between Guzerat, Rajpootana, Malwa, and Hindustan. Although not so large, it was almost as wealthy as Oojein. Contributions had before been levied on it three different times by Holkar; but as these exactions were in some degree made good to those from whom they were extorted, by a partial remission of revenue, the city was not ruined. The present visitation was more destructive. Jeswunt Row, to prevent the flight of inhabitants, agreed, when within twelve miles distance, to take a comparatively light fine of three lacks of rupees; but next day, when he had completely surrounded it, and brought two hundred guns to bear upon its weak defences, he summoned the governor to deliver up the town at discretion, or to abide the consequences of an immediate assault. Opposition was in vain; the surrender was agreed to; and the city was systematically plundered of all its wealth. Officers were appointed to every quarter, and furnished with troops, accountants, and workmen. The house of the governor alone was exempted from a search, which was elsewhere carried so far as to dig up the floor of every other mansion where there was the least appearance of comfort or wealth. The property

found was directed to be seized, with the exception only of the clothes and ornaments which females had upon their persons. Though a few of the public officers who were supposed to have concealed money were tortured till they revealed it, no other excesses or cruelties were committed, nor any insult offered to individuals; but this regularity made the work more complete, and the loss greater, than could have been incurred by indiscriminate plunder. The lowest estimate of the public and private property taken on this occasion exceeds one million* sterling. So far is certain, that Jeswunt Row received in money, jewels, goods, and grain, an amount equal to sixty lacks, with which he paid the arrears of his army, which was at this period called upon to engage in a war with the British government.

A negotiation had been for some time carrying
A. D. 1804. on between Jeswunt Row and Lord Lake; but, while the former proffered friendship, his demands were of a character that marked his insincerity, and several intercepted letters to Rajas in Hindustan brought his hostile designs to light, which were confirmed by his rejection of every overture towards a reasonable settlement. The barbarous

* The amount stated in the manuscript from which I write, is one crore of rupees, or one hundred lacks; which, at two shillings the rupee, is one million sterling.

murder of the British* officers proclaimed the nature of the war intended to be carried on. He had written to General Wellesley, who commanded in the Deckan, in terms of such boastful arrogance† that they could only be considered as a declaration of war; but the Governor-general desisted from proceeding to extremities until all hopes of his adopting a course consistent with the general tranquillity or safety of the Company's possessions were at an end.

It is foreign to the object of this history to detail the events of the war that ensued between the British government and Jeswunt Row Holkar. It commenced by his losing the fort and province of Touk Rampoora; but the imprudent advance of the detachment under Colonel Monson into Malwa, though attended at first with success‡, enabled Holkar to bring his whole force upon a small corps, remote from all support,

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* The names of these officers were Tod, Ryan, and Vickers; they were murdered at Nahar Mughanah, (or Tiger's Hill,) about fourteen miles from Odeypoor. This occurred in May 1804; the reason assigned was their correspondence with the British commander-in-chief.

† This letter was written in February 1804. "Countries of "many hundred coss (Jeswunt Row observed) shall be overrun. "He (meaning Lord Lake) shall not have leisure to breathe "for a moment, and calamity will fall on lacks of human "beings by a continued war, in which my army will overwhelm like the waves of the sea."

‡ The capture of the fort of Hinglaisghur.

and its disastrous retreat enabled him to enter Hindustan at the head of a very numerous army as a conqueror. The anticipation of success with which this event inspired his followers was destroyed by a series of memorable reverses. The failure of the attack on Delhi, the complete rout of his cavalry at Furruckabad, and the defeat of his infantry and loss of his guns at Deig, were crowded into one short month; and although the British suffered severely in the subsequent disastrous attacks on Bhurtpoor, this event did not prevent the necessity of Holkar's retreating from Hindustan seven months after he entered it, with an army defeated and disgraced, and which had lost almost all its guns and equipments.

When he entered Hindustan, according to the most correct account that had been obtained of his army, it amounted to ninety-two thousand men, of whom sixty-six thousand were cavalry, seven thousand artillery, and nineteen thousand infantry, and one hundred and ninety pieces of ordnance; and he left it with his whole force diminished to thirty-five thousand horse, seven thousand infantry and artillery, and thirty-five guns. His principal loss of men was by desertions; and among those that left him were some of his oldest and best officers.*

* Bhowanee Shunker, his oldest, and hitherto his most

Dowlet Row Sindia, who had nearly involved himself in a second war with the British government, by falling again under the influence of Sirjee Row Ghatkia, was recalled by the events of this campaign to a sense of his danger. He concluded a second treaty with the British government: agreed to exclude for ever from his councils a flagitious minister, who was the avowed cause of his aberration from his faith: and abandoned altogether the cause of Jeswunt Row Holkar. The latter chief, however, had, before he separated from Sindia's army, been a principal instigator and actor in plundering Ambajee Inglia, an officer whom Sindia had long employed in the management of his richest provinces, and who was now compelled to surrender his wealth* by means as violent and unjust as those by which it had been amassed.

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faithful friend, left him on this occasion. There is but one account of his defection. It was caused by the danger in which both his honour and life stood from the hostility of Heranat Dada, the unworthy favourite of Jeswunt Row, who during this service had made several efforts to ruin a man whose character and conduct were continually contrasted with his own, by an army who respected Bhowanee Shunker as much as they detested him. I have every reason to believe, from what passed between me and Bhowanee Shunker when he came over, that the account given of his motives is correct.

* Fifty-six lacks were extorted from Ambajee, of which Jeswunt Row Holkar got half.

Jeswunt Row remained with his diminished army, during the rainy season, in Mewar, and then re-entering Upper Hindustan, proceeded by rapid marches to the Punjab, followed by the British army, where he was compelled to sue for peace, by the conditions of which, contenting himself with the recovery of the Holkar territories, such as they were in the time of Alia Bhye, (with the exception of all claims and possessions North of the Chumbul,) he abandoned the wild pretensions he had for some time cherished, of restoring, through the means of predatory warfare, the former glory of the Mahratta name. It is difficult to discover what expectation Jeswunt Row could have indulged from his last enterprise. Several of his officers who have been interrogated, state, that he had hopes of aid from Runjeet Singh; and that he expected (if at all successful) Dowlet Row Sindia would again be disposed to adopt the cause of his nation; but the fact probably was, that having lost his possessions in the Deckan, and indeed in Central India, (for almost all his territories in that quarter had been occupied by the British,) and having no means of keeping his troops together but by plunder, he desired to lead them into a country where they could subsist; and it is highly probable that Sindia encouraged a plan which served a temporary purpose, by carrying

Jeswunt Row and his lawless followers to a distance.

When Jeswunt Row returned from the Punjab, he halted for about a month in the country of Jeypoor; and while his armies wasted its fields, he exacted eighteen lacks of rupees, from the fears of the Raja and his ministers, who had (from causes unnecessary here to explain) been at that moment deprived of the friendship and protection of the British government. From Jeypoor he marched A. D. 1806. into Marwar, where he commenced a complete reformation of his army, on the principle of reducing its numbers to a scale more proportioned to his receipts, and of adding to the efficiency of those he retained, by introducing subordination and discipline. He discharged most of the loose bands of horse he had hitherto maintained, advising them to return to their homes or seek other service, as he neither had power to continue a war against the British, nor revenues to afford them subsistence.

Maun Singh, Raja of Joudpoor, visited Jeswunt Row when in the province of Ajmeer, and brought with him that chief's family, of which he had taken charge when the latter marched to the Punjab. Maun Singh claimed his assistance against the Raja of Jeypoor in the contest which had arisen between these potentates for the beautiful and high-born Princess of Odeypoor, to whose

hand both of them pretended; but the Jeypoor Raja having advanced eighteen lacks of rupees, on the express condition that this aid should be withheld, the reproaches of Maun Singh, for violated faith and neglected friendship, were lost on the callous ear of a chief, whose life had been passed in sacrificing every tie to the necessities of the moment. A serious rebellion had broken out in his army; and with this excuse for the non-performance of his engagements, he dismissed his old friend, promising, however, that he would be neutral in the ensuing contest, and that he would hereafter send Ameer Khan to his assistance.

The chief mutineers in Jeswunt Row's army were the Deckany horse, and some others whom he proclaimed it his intention to discharge. He had, to calm their violence, given his nephew, Kundee Row, as an hostage for the payment of their arrears; but, provoked by his evasions and delays, they determined to raise this boy, in whose name the government was carried on, to a more substantial exercise of authority; and, taking advantage of Gunput Row, the Dewan of the family, being along with him, they hoisted his standard, and declared, that allegiance was due to him alone as the legitimate representative of the house of Holkar, and that Jeswunt Row, who was the offspring of a slave, could only be

deemed an usurper. Gunput Row was a willing instrument on this occasion*; but Kundee Row, though only ten years of age, is stated by all to have remonstrated against their proceedings with a spirit and sense above his years. "You will (he "used to say) receive your arrears, which is your "sole object, and then abandon me to destruc-"tion." The anticipations of the child were too prophetic. All that Jeswunt Row received from Jeypoor was given to the mutineers, who, on receiving their pay, marched for their homes, and within the week the sudden death of Kundee Row was announced to the army. There is no doubt that he was poisoned by Jeswunt Row, acting, it is supposed, by the advice of his Gooroo, or religious guide, Chimna Bhow, a man of a dissipated and cruel character, to whose influence some of the worst actions of Jeswunt Row are attributed. The alarm which the conduct of the insurgents had caused in the mind of Jeswunt Row, was not allayed by the sacrifice of Kundee Row; while Casi Row survived, he was still in danger. His death was resolved upon, and Chimna Bhow is believed to have suggested this second act of A.D 1806.

* Gunput Row was made prisoner, but effected his escape, and first fled to Jeypoor, whence he went to Benares, and did not return till Jeswunt Row had ceased to act as the head of the Holkar state.

atrocity: he certainly lent himself to its perpetration.*

A general feeling of horror was the result of

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* Chimna Bhow went to Kergond in Nemaur, of which district he had the management, and where Casi Row and his wife were under his charge. It has been said that he did not mean to put them to death, but that he was compelled to do so by an attempt made to release them, by a party of Bungush Khan's Patans, under Dadahu Khan. Bungush Khan has given a detailed account of the transaction, on the report of the persons he employed. Their object was to release Casi Row, whose fate their attempts may perhaps have accelerated. According to this chief's statement, founded on the reports of his officers, the murder was committed in the Jungle, at some distance from Kergond; but a more particular detail of the affair given by a Sepoy then in the service of Chimna Bhow, and evidently an actor in the scene, states that Casi Row and his wife had been removed to Beejaghur, and were prisoners in a house near the lower fort of that place, when its being surrounded by Bungush Khan's Patans, led to an order for their immediate execution. The Sepoys, of which the narrator was one, are represented by this man as having refused to obey the order; on which, agreeably to his evidence (which is very particular), a relation of Chimna Bhow's entered the room, and first struck off the head of Casi Row, and afterwards of his wife Anundee Bhye. The latter was pregnant, and a report was circulated and believed by numbers, that the child was born and saved. This has since been proved to be without the least foundation; and Chimna Bhow is known to have reported at the time to his master, that there existed no human being to dispute with him, or his children, the power he had usurped as chief of the Holkar state.

these crimes; but all expression of it was repressed, from the dread of Jeswunt Row, whose increased violence at this period gave symptoms of that insanity which soon became outrageous, and the commencement of which his family and adherents (perhaps in kindness to his memory) date from the murder of his nephew Kundee Row.

When the mutiny of his troops took place, Jeswunt Row employed Ameer Khan to pacify the Mahomedans, who were the most clamorous and violent. That chief appears to have taken advantage of the opportunity to urge the fulfilment of their original engagement to divide equally the possessions they might obtain. Though Jeswunt Row evaded the full performance of this agreement, he granted, in addition to other lands, the districts of Perawoe* and Tonk. He also made over the collection of the Kotah tribute to the Patan chief, from whom he now ostensibly separated; and the latter went to serve Juggut Singh, Raja of Jeypoor, who agreed to pay the whole of his followers, in the hope of obtaining, through his aid, the Princess of Odeypoor, who has been noticed as the cause of his war with Maun Singh.

By making over this part of his army to the

* This Pergunnah, which lies between Aggur and Kotah, is estimated at a revenue of fifty thousand rupees per annum.

Raja of Jeypoor, Jeswunt Row gave the promised support to that chief, while he evaded the performance of his engagement to the Joudpoor prince, by pretending that Ameer Khan was no longer in his service; and the fact is, the latter assumed at this period independence of action, and continued thenceforward to subsist himself and army upon the country of Rajpootana.

After Holkar returned to Bampoora, he commenced casting cannon, and attempting changes and improvements in his army, with an ardour and violence which decidedly indicated that insanity, the crisis of which it, no doubt, accelerated. It was first observed that his memory failed, and that he became every day more impatient and outrageous in his temper. The effects of excessive drinking, to which he had been long addicted*, were now aggravated by hard labour at the furnaces and founderies, in which he occupied himself night and day, often pouring himself the metal into the mould of his new cannon. By great efforts he cast† above two hun-

* Jeswunt Row Holkar was from his youth dissipated. When he took Poona (A. D. 1801) he gave way to every excess. His favourite drink was cherry and raspberry brandy, and the shops of Bombay were drained of these and other strong liquors for his supply.

† A Hindu artificer called Subharam, was the chief director of his foundery. He was a slave and scholar of the famous

dred pieces of brass ordnance in three or four months, many of which were mounted as gallopers. He had received the strongest impressions of the superiority of this branch of artillery, from having experienced, in his campaign in Hindustan, their utility against his light troops. His cavalry, with the exception of two thousand * family adherents, he determined should consist of men on monthly pay, riding the horses of the government; and nearly ten thousand of this description were formed into regiments, and horses were ordered to be purchased in every direction to double their number. He broke up the remains of his old infantry, and formed twelve new battalions. Both men and horses in his new levies were measured with a standard; the latter were only bought when of a good size, but the battalions were divided into three classes †—the large, the middle,

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Maun Singh Chowdry, who long directed the foundery at Ougein; and is reported to have been a man of much science. The metal of the new cannon was purchased in every quarter, and at any price, for Jeswunt Row became furious at the least delay.

* These two thousand were what is termed Silhahdar; that is, men who provide and keep their own horses, and receive an average pay in lieu of all charges for their support.

† The Mahratta names for these different-sized battalions were, Outim, the great, Mudium, the middle, and Kumeesh, the small. The corps were known by these names.

and the small. Every recruit was measured, and sent to the corps to which his stature was appropriate. Jeswunt Row carried on these improvements in a manner that shewed the wandering of his mind. What he ordered must be done in a moment, or his violence was excessive; he personally superintended every operation, he was out at day-light drilling his troops, making the cavalry charge the infantry, the latter move upon the guns, which in their turn galloped to the flank and rear of the lines, and were made to fire close to the men and horses, to accustom both (as he used laughingly to observe) to stand the hottest fire. These sham fights took place twice a-day, and he appeared directing every individual, as well as the whole, with a species of personal activity and energy that accelerated improvement in a degree almost incredible. But the career of this extraordinary man was drawing to a close: he had passed seven or eight months in scenes such as have been described, before his madness reached the height which led to his confinement. It had long been perceived by those around him; but the awe his character inspired, made all dread proceeding to extremities. Jeswunt Row was himself not insensible to the progress of his malady. His violent proceedings, and the severe account to which he called his principal officers after he returned from the Punjab, caused many

of them to fly; and Balaram Seit, who had been the efficient agent employed in the negotiation with the British government *, had risen to be his Dewan, or minister. To him Jeswunt Row often communicated his alarm at the state of his reason. He was wont to exclaim with impatience, "What "I say one moment, I forget the next: give me "physic." Balaram used at the time to promise obedience to this request, and indeed to every other that Jeswunt Row made; and the latter, soothed by his compliance, thought no more of what had passed. Innumerable orders for putting different persons to death were given during his paroxysms; but one or two only suffered; the remainder were saved by the address and benevolence of the minister, who, while his natural timidity made him tremble† for his own life, was always most anxious to prevent the destruction of others. But such scenes could

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* This person, with an inferior agent called Shaick Hubeebullah, negotiated with me the treaty concluded in the Punjab in January 1806.

† The description of Balaram's interviews with Jeswunt Row at this period is ludicrous. He generally wrapped himself up in a thin cloth, and sat trembling. Jeswunt Row used to say at times, "What is the matter with you, Balaram?" "A slight fever," was the usual reply.—Notwithstanding this alarm, he kept his post, when many who had the character of more cour[illegible] deserted.

not long continue. One night, when Gungaram Kottaree had the charge of the guard over the palace, all the females ran out, exclaiming that they were in danger from the fury of the Maharaja. Gungaram, after directing them to a place of safety, entered the inner apartments; he at the same time sent for the minister Balaram: they could not at first discover Jeswunt Row, but, having brought lights, he was at last found trying to conceal himself in a large bundle of loose clothes. It was resolved by those present, that his insanity had reached an extremity, when he could no longer be suffered to go at large. Men were directed to seize him, and they took, or rather dragged him to an outer room, that the females of the family might return to their apartments. Although Jeswunt Row appeared, when force was used, mentally insensible to what passed, his bodily exertions to emancipate himself were very great, and, being increased by the strength which insanity creates, it required twenty or thirty men to master him; but that was at last effected, and he who a few hours before had received a real or feigned obedience to the slightest order, was now bound fast with ropes like a wild beast. The night passed in anxiety, but a sensible resolution was taken to attempt no concealment. On the ensuing morning the whole of the civil officers of the state and the army were informed, either verbal or

written communications, of his actual condition. No trouble ensued; all appeared contented to await the result. On the third day, Jeswunt Row had an interval of reason: he asked why he had been bound, and, when informed of what had passed, he merely said, "You acted right, I must have "been very mad; but release me from cords; "send for my brother Ameer Khan, and make "me well." A superstitious belief existed that some evil spirit, who haunted the palace of Bampoora, had bereft him of reason; and he was in consequence removed to Gurrote, a town at a short distance* from that city. His malady, though it became every day more confirmed, ceased to be so outrageous as at first. He was, however, kept in a tent by himself, surrounded by guards, and some of his most confidential servants were entrusted with the immediate custody of his person. They became early familiar with his fits of insanity, which were frequent, and various in their character. Sometimes they were violent, but oftener marked by a strange mixture of entertaining folly and mischief. Ameer Khan, who had hastened to obey his summons, appears to have made every effort to effect his recovery. He brought a Mahomedan phy-

* It lies fifteen miles South-west from Bampoora.

sician, who was at one time sanguine of success; and we receive a good impression of his sense and skill, from his having at first ridiculed the idea of Jeswunt Row's malady having its origin in any supernatural cause, and his latterly refusing to give him medicine, because he could not control those who had the charge of his diet, and who gave him what his physician thought would counteract his remedies. A Brahmin* was sent by Dowlet Row Sindia to attempt the cure; but, either from a contempt for this doctor, who practised much superstitious mummery in the administration of his medicines, or want of respect towards the prince who sent him, Jeswunt Row appeared to delight in making this person the object of his most malicious and indecent jests†. But, to conclude, all attempts for his recovery failed. After remaining about a year in a state of madness, he sunk into one of complete fatuity. While in this last stage, he never spoke, and seemed quite insensible to every thing around

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* The name of this man was Kundee Row Dashee.

† These jests were at times not confined to words, nor limited to this Brahmin physician; and it was with satisfaction that those around saw Chimna Bhoy, who was less distinguished as his tutor than as his instigator to crime, suddenly assailed by his master, who had called him on pretext of consulting him, but gave him, before he could escape, a most severe beating.

him. He was carefully attended*, and fed like an infant with milk. By this treatment, his existence was protracted for nearly three years, when he died † at the city of Bampoora; near which, a small but handsome and solid mausoleum ‡ has been erected over his ashes.

Jeswunt Row Holkar was of middling stature, and of very strong and active make: his complexion was dark, and his countenance had suffered much in appearance from the loss of an eye §; but its expression was nevertheless agreeable, from the animation given by very high spirits, which he had constitutionally, and which not only attended him through danger and misfortune, but struggled for a period with the dread-

* The female who attended him throughout his madness, and fed him while in this state, was Lukshmee Bhye, a most respectable woman, who gained such extraordinary influence over him, that he did, like a child, every thing she wished.

† Jeswunt Row died on the 11th of the Hindu month Kartick, in the year of the Sumbhut 1868, corresponding with the 20th October, A. D. 1811.

‡ It is called a Chetteree. I was pleased to find, when I visited it, one of Jeswunt Row's favourite horses, enjoying rest and good food near the tomb of his master.

§ The loss of his eye was occasioned by the bursting of a matchlock at Burgonda, already noticed. It is a common-place observation in India, that "one-eyed men are wicked." Jeswunt Row, when told the sight was gone from his eye, jestingly observed, "I was before bad enough, but I shall now be the Gooroo, or high-priest of rogues."

ful malady that terminated his life. This chief had been well educated: he understood Persian, though he could neither read nor write it; but in his own language, the Mahratta, he wrote with great correctness; and he was a quick and able accountant. In horsemanship, and in all manly exercises, particularly the management of the spear, few excelled Jeswunt Row; and his courage was fully equal to his skill. Of this he gave proofs on every occasion. At Poona he led the charge on Sindia's guns, and, being wounded and pulled from his horse by an artillery soldier of great strength, he wrestled with his enemy on foot, till one of his attendants came to his aid, and, after slaying his antagonist, remounted him. He gloried in such exploits, and, indeed, in all feats which displayed personal prowess. What has been said comprises all the qualities he possessed that are entitled to praise: they were such as were to be expected from his frame of body and early habits of life. The natural son of a Mahratta chief, born to no expectation beyond that of commanding a body of predatory horse, and initiated in infancy to all that belonged to that condition, Jeswunt Row would have been distinguished, had his father lived, as one of the boldest and most active freebooters in a Mahratta army. This was, from the first, the fame he aspired to; and it would have been happy for him-

self and others, had his sphere continued limited to subordinate action. But, compelled to flight by the murder of one brother*, and warned of the danger in which his own life stood by the public execution of another†, when fortune placed him at the head of the Holkar state, he adopted a desperate course; and his mind, if ever it were alive to better sentiments, soon became callous to every feeling of virtue or morality. But had it been otherwise, he early arrived at a bad eminence, from which it was difficult, if not impossible, to retreat; for although his natural energy supported him in authority, Jeswunt Row was never more than the leader of an army of plunderers, to whom he lent the aid of his talents, his name, and his cause, and who, in return, adhered to him throughout the vicissitudes of his turbulent life. He directed, without controlling, their licentiousness; and they, awed by his vigour, and soothed by his ample indulgence to their worst excesses, served him with an obedience that made him terrible as a destroyer. It may be questioned by those who seek to palliate his crimes, whether he could have enjoyed power on any other terms. But it must be admitted that the part he acted was quite congenial to his character. He was, indeed, formed by nature to command

* By Dowlat Row Sindia. † By the Peishwa Bajerow.

a horde of plunderers. Master of the art of cajoling those who approached him—flattery, mirth, and wit, were alternately used to put his chiefs and troops into good humour, when want of pay, or other causes, led to their being discontented or mutinous. But attempts at intimidation on their part never failed of rousing a spirit which made the boldest tremble. "Do "not mistake me," he exclaimed to a Patan officer*, (who endeavoured to stop him, when the army was at Poona, to listen to a complaint about pay)—"do not mistake me for Ameer Khan. I "will have you plundered, for your insolence, of "what you have, instead of giving you more." The man fled, and thought himself fortunate to escape punishment. The anger of Jeswunt Row was, however, soon over, and his disposition is represented, by all who served him, to have been naturally kind and generous. But his ruling passion was power on any terms; and to attain and preserve that, all means were welcomed; nor could the most unworthy favourite, of whom he had several†, suggest a breach of faith or deed

* Jumsheer Khan, lately the manager of Nimbhera, where he died a few months ago.

† Chimna Bhow, his tutor, and Hurnant Dada (a barber by caste), whom he brought up and raised to great power, were his two principal favourites; and it is difficult to say which of the two was the worst man.

of atrocity, that he would not commit, to relieve the distress, or forward the object of the moment. Acting from such motives, he came like a demon of destruction to undo the fair fabric of the virtuous Alia Bhye; and from the hour he commenced his career in Central India, the work of desolation began. His apologists (and there are many who advocate his cause) say, that he had from the first no country to protect; that the injustice of Sindia had plunged him so deep in guilt, that to retreat became impossible, as he never obtained regular resources sufficient to pay an army, which he could not disband without danger, both to his power, and to his life. All this is true to a certain extent; but, in reality, Jeswunt Row had no esteem for the principles of good and regular government, and never evinced the least desire to establish them. His object, often declared, was to restore the Mahratta supremacy over India by a revival of the ancient predatory system: but the times were different: for, instead of the falling empire of the Moguls, he had to contend against the rising fortunes of the British; and in place of the national force employed by Sevajee, he had a motley band of desperate freebooters, who recognized no one common principle but the love of rapine. The failure of his campaign in Hindostan awakened this chief from his dreams of plunder and conquest. He tried to reform his army, and

raved about improvements in his internal system of rule; but the end of his career approached. A life which had commenced in trouble, and which had been marked by all the extremes of poverty, of violence, of dissipation, of ambition, and of crime, was to terminate in insanity, and leave a lesson how inadequate courage and talent, when unaccompanied by moderation and virtue, were to the successful conduct of public affairs, or the happiness of those governed.

The actions and character of Jeswunt Row Holkar have been particularly dwelt upon, from a consideration of the influence which his short rule of only ten years had upon the country under his dominion. From the day that Tukajee died, the time of trouble, as it is emphatically called, commenced; for from that hour men ceased to have even the consolation that belongs to those who are governed by a despot, whose power, though it oppresses them, at least keeps other tyrants aloof. Jeswunt Row not only left them at times exposed to his enemies, but often was either unwilling or unable to protect them from the excesses of his own army. Notwithstanding all these circumstances, so long as he exercised the functions of government, there was always some mixture of pride to his family and subjects, in the contemplation of an active and daring soldier struggling with fortune; and hopes

of change and reform appear to have been cherished to the last; but when his power ceased, and his troops contemned the restraint which weak ministers and commanders attempted to impose on them, men's sufferings became more intolerable from the baseness of the instruments by whom they were oppressed. The fact is, the Holkar government may be said to have been suspended from the date of Jeswunt Row's insanity, until restored in the person of his son Mulhar Row by the treaty of Mundissor. An account of the different ministers and leaders who exercised authority in the name of the family, during the eleven years of unparalleled anarchy which intervened, merits, and must receive, particular notice; for, independent of its importance as local history, it is singularly calculated to illustrate the habits, prejudices, and character of the natives of India.

CHAPTER VII.

Events at the Court of Holkar, from the Insanity of Jeswunt Row, A. D. 1808, till A. D. 1820.

A. D. 1808. AFTER Jeswunt Row became insane, Balaram Seit came ostensibly into the principal management of affairs; but he acted on all points under the immediate direction of Toolsah Bhye, who had some time before raised herself, by her beauty and talents, to a very commanding influence in the government, and was now considered as its head. The subsequent actions and death of this lady have an interest that will excuse a few words regarding her origin. A person called Adjeebah obtained local celebrity as a priest of the sect of Maun Bhow*; and Hureka Bhye, who was the favourite mistress of the first Mulhar Row, becoming his disciple, Meenah Bhye, who was the

* This sect of Maun Bhow owes its origin to an impostor, called Krishna Bhut, well known in the Southern parts of India. The doctrines of this sect teach the sacredness of the Vedas, but deny the Puranas and Geetas.

favourite female servant of Hureka Bhye, also elected him as her Gooroo, or holy father; and, from visiting at his house, became acquainted with Toolsah Bhye, who was then in the family, and, indeed, the supposed daughter of the Maun Bhow priest*. She was married prior to her acquaintance with Jeswunt Row, who from the moment he saw her†, became enamoured of her beauty; and in a few days Toolsah Bhye was in his house, and her husband in a prison. The latter was afterwards, at the lady's intercession, released and sent to his home in the Deckan, having received, in compensation for the loss of his handsome wife, a horse, a dress, and a small sum of money. Toolsah Bhye, from the day she became the mistress of Jeswunt Row, maintained her hold upon his affections; her authority was soon completely established over his household, and this gave her

* Like popes and cardinals, this order of holy men (who are prohibited all intercourse with the female sex) can only acknowledge cousins and nieces.

† She was brought from Mandoo (where she had gone with Adjeebah) to Mhysir, by Shamrow Madik, who had seen and admired her beauty, and encouraged Jeswunt Row to form the connexion, expecting, probably, his own interest would be improved by the influence of one whose advancement he had promoted. These particulars were related to me by the nephew and heir of Shamrow, the present manager of Hursorah.

an influence and direction in all public affairs, that made her, as a matter of course, succeed to the regency during his insanity. The claims of females to such power are readily admitted by the Mahrattas; and the pretensions of Toolsah Bhye do not appear to have ever been openly disputed. She used to hold daily Durbar, or court, but in a manner quite different from Alia Bhye. She was always seated behind a curtain, and communicated with her ministers and officers through her confidant, Meenah Bhye, who remained unveiled on the outside.

Toolsah Bhye at first gave her entire confidence to Balaram Seit, and, as that minister had the support of Ameer Khan, his authority seemed well established. The army, however, soon became altogether insubordinate. The infantry seized upon the person of Jeswunt Row, and carried him to a tent in their own lines, declaring he had been rendered insane by witchcraft, and that they would effect his recovery. Ameer Khan, who succeeded in quelling* this mutiny, was soon obliged to quit Malwa, to attend to his interests in Rajpootana; but he left Ghuffoor Khan, a Mahomedan, who had married a sister of his wife,

* He possessed ample means to effect this object. Jeswunt Row left his finances in a good state, and ten lacks of rupees, which were in the treasury, were seized by Ameer Khan.

at the court of Holkar as his representative. This chief received the title of Nabob, and an assignment* of twenty thousand rupees per mensem was fixed by Balaram Seit for the support of himself, and of one thousand horse, which he agreed to maintain. These events occurred about seven or eight months after Jeswunt Row was confined.

The army, which had been during the last season on the Kali Sind river, moved Southward when the rains approached, and established its cantonments at Mhow, where one of the first acts of Balaram nearly led to the overthrow of his own authority. The twelve new battalions of infantry, with their guns, were each under a separate officer. He formed them into one large Campoo, or legion,' and gave the command to Dherma Kower, (a favourite personal servant of Jeswunt Row,) on whom he bestowed the title of Colonel. This man, who was of a bold and restless mind, early listened to the suggestions of those who advised him to seize the reins of government. His first step was to plant guards over the tent of Jeswunt Row, that of Toolsah Bhye, and the other ladies of the family; and his second, was the issue of a positive order to allow none to visit

* This amount was the estimated net produce of a Jaidad, or assignment of land, granted to Ghuffoor Khan.

the insane prince, or Toolsah Bhye, without his permission. He at the same time directed the ministers and other officers of government to carry on business as usual; but warned them to take no measures that had not the sanction of his approbation and concurrence. Dherma was well known as a man of courage and resolution; but, though he succeeded in intimidating all for the moment, so violent a proceeding could not but excite opposition. The ladies of Holkar's family (particularly Toolsah Bhye) made secret representations to Ghuffoor Khan, intreating him to liberate them from the restraint in which they were placed; and that chief united with Balaram Seit and some officers in a combination to destroy Dherma. They were joined by Raja Mohyput Ram*, who had the year before fled from the Hyderabad territories and joined Jeswunt Row at Rampoora, by whom he was welcomed † and taken into

* Mohyput Ram owed his first rise to the influence he acquired as Paishkar, or principal man of business, with Monsieur Raymond, when that officer commanded the French corps in the Nizam's service. In 1799, when that body was disarmed and reformed, he made himself very useful, and rose to high favour and employ. On the death of Meer Alum, the minister at Hyderabad, he attempted to excite disturbances in the country, which terminated in his being compelled to fly the Nizam's territories.

† He is said to have proposed a plan, which Jeswunt Row

service, with a thousand followers: considerable arrears were due to these mercenaries, and the demand of payment was to be the pretext for putting Jeswunt Row under restraint*. This was accordingly done in the usual manner, and the customs of the Mahratta armies on such occasions prevented Dherma Kower from taking any violent measures to repel an insult, which, he saw from the first, was directed against him-

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entertained favourably, of proceeding to the Deckan, to aid the Nizam in an effort to emancipate himself from the British government, with whose interference in his affairs Mohypat Ram represented that sovereign as dissatisfied. Such reports filled the Ackbars, or native papers of the day; but the Nizam, acting no doubt at the suggestion of the British Resident, expressed his wish in a letter to Jeswunt Row Holkar, under date the 3d of February, 1809, that he should meet with no encouragement. Jeswunt Row, in reply, observed, that his honour forbad the surrender of a man who had sought his protection; but he stated, that it was his intention to send Mohypat Ram to Calcutta to have his fate decided by "the Council."

* The restraint termed Dherna, which troops in the irregular armies of India have from usage a right of inflicting on their chiefs, to compel payment of arrears, consists in preventing them from moving from the place, or eating, till the affair is adjusted. The party inflicting this restraint becomes equally subject to it; and the privation suffered by both parties usually leads to a speedy compromise. The usage of the Dherna is perfectly understood, and, generally speaking, strictly observed. Other troops will not act against a party who are adopting this recognized mode of coercing their commander to the payment of their arrears.

self. Balaram Seit and Gungaram Kottaree pretended to interpose, and persuade Mohyput Ram to take thirty thousand rupees and move away, to which overture he seemingly consented, and actually received twenty thousand. Dherma, however, at this stage of the transaction, discovered there was a serious combination against his power, if not his life. His measures were prompt and decided. He sent an order to Mohyput Ram to march forthwith from camp, and at the same time went himself to the tent of Ghuffoor Khan, whom he addressed as the representative of Ameer Khan, in a short but resolute manner. "Ameer Khan," said he, "stands to me in the "same relation as Jeswunt Row, and I am but a "slave of the latter. It is only a few days since "I shewed my respect for him, and my friendship "for you, by obtaining grants of Jowrah and "other districts for the payment of your adhe-"rents. Why have you plotted with a stranger, "like Mohyput Ram, to seize and destroy me?" Ghuffoor Khan, not a little alarmed at his manner, denied the fact. This conversation took place at night, and shortly after sunrise next day a battalion, with two guns, moved down upon the tents* of Mohyput Ram, who had been warned

* The cantonments of Jeswunt Row near Mhow extended over nearly the same ground which the British lines now occupy, and Mohyput Ram's tents were a little in the rear of the present head-quarters.

again to march. He professed his willingness to obey this last order, but his people were all dispersed at the time, cooking their victuals, or otherwise employed. The delay was construed into a proof of disobedience, and an attack made upon his person, while he was remonstrating against such violent proceedings. He had only one attendant with him at the moment, and could offer no resistance. He was shot dead on the spot by one of Dherma's sepoys, his head cut off, and thrown, like that of a common malefactor, before Jeswunt Row's tent, to which Ghuffoor Khan had hastened in the beginning of the fray, in the hope of saving his friend; but, finding that too late, he contented himself with intreating Dherma to allow the head to be restored, that it might be burnt along with the corpse. In this he succeeded, as well as in obtaining the restitution of some of the horses belonging to the followers of Mohyput Ram, all of which, with his property, said to have been very great*, was in the first instance seized on account of the state.

Ameer Khan was engaged in operations against the Raja of Nagpoor, when he received Ghuffoor Khan's account of these transactions: he instructed

* He is said to have had very rich jewels, most of which were put into Jeswunt Row's treasury. It is, however, stated in the papers of that period, that he had been obliged, before his death, to part with the greatest part of his valuables to support himself and adherents.

that chief to remain at his post, and promised to hasten to his aid and that of the family of Holkar. The contents of his letter were communicated by a secret agent to Dherma, and he sent instant orders to Ghuffoor Khan to leave the camp, threatening him with extinction if he did not. The mandate was promptly obeyed; the Mahomedan chief marched to Jowrah, where he was joined by the nephew* of Mohyput Ram, and by one of Sindia's predatory leaders†, who brought with him five hundred men and two guns. Ghuffoor Khan, with this force, began not only to exact what he could from his own assigned lands‡, but also to plunder neighbouring districts. He was, however, soon obliged to retreat to Kotah by the advance of Dherma Kower, who, detaching a force to take possession of Jowrah, moved himself with the court and army with the professed intention of taking Jeswunt Row Holkar to the shrine of Mahadeva, near Odeypoor, as from that pilgrimage some Brahmins had predicted the recovery of his reason. It is to the honour of this low-born usurper of authority, that he preserved a discipline rarely practised in Indian armies; for, though exactions were made from the revenue, hardly a field was destroyed, or a village plundered on the route. The march of Dherma was delayed

* Zeeput Row. † Dhonda Punt Tantia.

‡ Jaidad.

by many events, and he had only reached Burra Sadree when Ameer Khan* arrived with an army A. D. 1810.
augmented by almost the whole of the Pindarries, who had at this period become followers of his standard. His superiority in horse enabled him to surround the troops of Holkar, and he demanded of their leader, that Jeswunt Row should instantly be delivered over to his charge. This Dherma refused; but the regular infantry alone were attached to him; all others desired his downfal. Hostilities commenced, and lasted for about fifteen days. The cavalry of Ameer Khan could make no impression on the battalions and guns of his opponent; but the latter, who were cut off from their supplies, could not hope to protract their resistance. The horse became bolder every day, and Ameer Khan shewed unusual courage on this occasion. He in person stimulated his men to make their best efforts to save the family of Holkar from the disgrace and danger to which they were exposed. The latter was not slight, for Dherma, finding he was hard pressed, and that it was difficult, if not impossible, to extricate himself, had recourse to a desperate expedient. The insane Jeswunt Row, Tool-

* Ameer Khan had at this period been compelled to leave the territories of Nagpoor by the advance of a British army under Sir Barry Close.

sah Bhye, and the young prince Mulhar Row,* were taken, (under guard of a small party) the day the army left Burra Sadree, into a thick part of the Jungle, or wild forest; and there can be little doubt his intention was to murder them, in the hope of escaping himself by destroying the causes of contention; but his design was frustrated †. One of Jeswunt Row's attendants conveyed information of these proceedings to Ruttoo Potail ‡, a Mahratta chief of the household troops §. He instantly galloped to the spot, and sent orders for all the cavalry that could be collected to join him. Ruttoo Potail asked Dherma why he had brought the prince to such a place. Toolsah Bhye, who was weeping aloud, exclaimed, "he has brought us here to "be murdered." The excuses offered by Dherma were of a character to confirm every impression of his guilt; and as the horse were now in sufficient strength to enable Ruttoo Potail to assume the tone of command, a halt of the whole army was ordered at the spot ‖ they had reached; and Dher-

* The present head of the Holkar family, who was then only four years of age.

† Several persons, acquainted with this intended crime, gave evidence against Dherma, after he was seized.

‡ I know this plain unassuming soldier well. He has still a principal command in the Pagah, and stands deservedly high in the court of the young prince, whose life he saved.

§ Pagah.

‖ Near Sangurah, about four miles from Sadree.

ma and his principal associate Soobharam were soon afterwards arrested by the officers of his own corps. These were gained by a promise of their arrears, to turn against their late commanders, who were brought next morning prisoners to the tent of Toolsah Bhye. She directed their immediate execution, and they were carried in a cart to a spot about a mile from the lines, where they were put to death.

Periods of trouble form remarkable men. Dherma Kower* had probably become a favourite domestic of Jeswunt Row from his activity† and courage. He appears to have caught many of the qualities of his master. He returned the confidence of Bularam Seit with ingratitude, using the military power that minister gave him, almost the day after it was conferred, for the purposes of his own ambition. Yet the manner in which he controlled the rabble, at whose head he was placed, shewed he was no common character. If the family

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* Dherma Kower was of the Aheer, or cowherd tribe, who are very numerous in Central India, and give its name to a province adjoining Malwa to the North-east.

† In 1805, when I negotiated the treaty with Jeswunt Row in the Punjab, Dherma Kower came several times with secret instructions to that chief's Vakeels, and must at that period have enjoyed his full confidence. He was strong and active, and appeared to me a man of both intelligence and energy.

of Jeswunt Row, and the chief officers of the state, acted under restraint, they had at least the consolation of seeing the army kept in subordination, and the country protected. This was the more extraordinary, as the habits of Dherma were very dissipated: he indulged to excess in the use of liquor, and on the last night of his life, when the preparations taken to prevent his escape must have led him to anticipate his fate, he sat till he was seized, looking at a dance and drinking with Soobharam. The latter, an artful wicked man, is blamed by all as the deluder of Dherma, whose crimes have not deprived him of that sympathy which remarkable courage and manly resolution always excite. These feelings have been strengthened by his conduct in his last moments. Toolsah Bhye, when ordering the execution, said, "Send them to Hinglais," which is the name of a fort where state prisoners are confined; and the weakness of Soobharam led him to indulge hopes of life. "We are going to "be kept in confinement," said he to his companion. But Hinglais is also one of the names of Bhavani, the goddess of destruction, and Dherma, who better understood Toolsah Bhye's meaning, quickly replied, "You are mistaken, "brother. It is the celestial Hinglais to whom "we are consigned." The executioner made an ineffectual blow at his neck with one hand. He turned towards him with a stern look, and

said, "Take both hands, you rascal; after all, it "is the head of Dherma that is to be cut off."*

The battalions of infantry demanded the prompt payment of those arrears for which they had given up their leaders; and Ameer Khan succeeded, by levying a fine upon every commander in his camp, not excepting the Pindarry chiefs, in raising two lacks of rupees, which satisfied their wants for the moment.

After remaining about two months with the army, Ameer Khan moved to Rajpootana, furnished with orders to collect the tribute due to the Holkar state by the Raja of Jeypoor and other princes. Before he quitted camp a serious intrigue was raised against Balaram. Tantia Alikur, an artful Brahmin, who had great influence with the ladies of the Holkar family, desired to displace the minister. Ameer Khan, who anticipated this attempt, had requested Toolsah Bhye, if she wished at any time to get rid of Balaram, to send him to his camp, and he would, if necessary, put him to death. He at the same time desired the latter, if directed to join him, to do so with perfect confidence. A few days

* I received the particulars of Dherma's end from a witness of the scene, and the last expressions of this remarkable man were confirmed by the executioner, who is now at Indore.

after he marched, Toolsah Bhye sent for the minister, and ordered him to proceed and join Ameer Khan, whom she required to fulfil his promise, and rid her and the state of an enemy. The result was quite different from what she expected. Balaram was received with honour, and the Patan leader not only told him of the artifice he had used to save his life, but shewed him the letter desiring his death. These communications were followed with a proposition that Balaram should relieve Ameer Khan, who was in great distress from the heavy arrears due to his army, by accepting bills to a large amount in favour of the troops; and in return for this accommodation he was promised to be supported in his station. The minister assented to this arrangement, though he knew he had no power to fulfil it. He accordingly allowed Ameer Khan to give his chiefs and officers bills upon him, at different dates, to no less an amount than a crore* and sixty-four lacks of rupees. These orders were known by those who received them to be little better than waste paper; but still there was a hope of obtaining something, however small, and they were taken by men who despaired of any other payment. Ameer Khan went in person to Holkar's court to reconcile Toolsah Bhye to the minister, which, after much trouble, he effected.

* More than a million and a half sterling.

and he was again proclaimed sole manager of the affairs of the state. His first care, after his re-establishment, was to discount the bills he had accepted *, that he might acquit himself, as far as he was able, of his obligations to Ameer Khan.

The most destructive expedients were at this period resorted to, in order to support the court and army of Holkar. Several of the principal officers were appointed Soubahdars, or governors, and sent with military detachments, which they were directed to subsist, and to remit what they could collect beyond their expenditure to the government. These commands were given generally to persons who became answerable for the arrears of the soldiers, and paid a certain sum in advance to the treasury, besides bribes to Toolsah Bhye's favourite ministers. They received in return a latitude to plunder, nor do they appear to have been limited as to the territories on which they were to levy contributions. The districts of Sindia and the Puar suffered equally with those of

* We may judge the character of this transaction from the fact, that he paid the whole by a disbursement of two lacks and a half of ready money, and the distribution of cloth to the amount of two lacks more, the whole being a settlement below half an anna in the rupee. The rate of payment differed: some did not receive so much. A respectable man, Delsook Rai, informed me that he had an order for twelve thousand rupees in cash, for which he was glad to accept one hundred and nine rupees value in cloth.

Holkar. To be defenceless was a sufficient ground for the attack of these predatory Soubahdars, who, with the name of officers of a Mahratta state, were guilty of more cruel excesses than even the Pindarries. It would be a waste of time to follow the progress of these delegated robbers *, all whose measures and operations had the same character of violence and atrocity.

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* The first of these high officers was Juggah Bappoo; four battalions were sent with this person, of which two were commanded by Roshun Beg, a man who had risen from the rank of a common soldier by his activity and courage, and who afterwards acquired reputation among the leaders of Holkar's army. Bappoo Vishun, the present Buckshee, was the next Soubahdar that Balaram made. His corps were chiefly infantry, but another party, detached to subsist upon the country, were all horse. These, after plundering some villages of Sindia's, fell upon Mulharghur, then held by Ghuffoor Khan (A. D. 1810); and the whole of the influence of that chief, combined with the awe still inspired by the name of Ameer Khan, could hardly obtain the recall of this body of plunderers, who were living upon lands that had been assigned for his support.

In the same year a man who afterwards acted a very prominent part, was first brought forward. His rise and conduct when in command is the best comment upon the state of Holkar's court and the unhappy condition of Malwa. Ram Deen, a low-born Brahmin, inhabitant of the Company's territories in Hindustan, was employed as an orderly by Jeswunt Row Holkar, and became a favourite with his countryman Diah Ram Jemadar, a man of character and influence, who first brought him into notice by placing him in charge of Mhy-

Although Jeswunt Row had commenced the work of desolation, while he retained his reason there was still a sovereign; one who, though

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sir. Ram Deen plundered the inhabitants of this place to supply himself with the means of advancement; but his proceedings on this first occasion were so shameless and wicked, and the complaints against him so numerous, that Toolsah Bhye was obliged to order him to be seized and put in irons. This occurred about the period that Balaram was restored to power, and he was released through the interference of Ameer Khan, whom he, no doubt, propitiated by a share of plunder. On the departure of this chief to Rajpootana, Ram Deen addressed himself to the venality of Meenah Bhye, who at this time exercised an almost exclusive influence in the councils of Toolsah Bhye; and through the effect of large bribes to this lady and others, and abundance of promises, this mean and wicked man was vested with a dress of honour, and had a seal of Prince, a standard, and all the insignia which constitute a Soubahdar, or Vicegerent, delivered to him. He took the Mahratta horse with him, on a promise of providing for their subsistence. He had at first only about a hundred infantry, with two guns; but with his success his views expanded, and he increased his corps by new levies. Four battalions were raised, and through the influence of Meenah Bhye a supply of cannon was furnished for the petty army of this leader, which soon became the terror of the Western parts of Malwa.

The commission of Ram Deen was general, and was given and received as conferring a right to plunder all, without discrimination, whom he had the power to plunder. Never was a better instrument of desolation selected. His character is a compound of servility, falsehood, and baseness, an artful flatterer, and an arrogant boaster, unrestrained by either principles or feeling; abject when in distress, and insolent in pros-

prompt and powerful to inflict wrong, had the power of punishing it in others. In the short usurpation of Dherma there was terror, which maintained subordination among the most lawless; but on his death it suited the policy of Ameer Khan, while he ravaged from Nagpoor to Joudpoor, to leave the family, ministers, and commanders of the government of Holkar, in such a state of anarchy as to preclude all possible combination to subvert his supremacy over a court, the name of which he continued to use as his pretext for exacting plunder.

Toolsah Bhye, the pupil, if not the daughter, of an artful priest, who with pretended sanctity was the slave of worldly ambition*, had been tutored in more than the common arts of her sex, and she possessed sufficient learning to be considered

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perity. With no ties of family or country, he went forth to extort from all men, and from all communities, what he could obtain without immediate danger. He was, however, a cautious calculator on this point, and it formed the only check upon his proceedings.

This man's character has been more dwelt upon than it merits, but his employment furnishes a good example of those measures which brought such unparalleled miseries upon the province of Malwa.

* Adjeebah, the Maun Bhow priest, is generally supposed to be the real father of Toolsah Bhye. This professed mendicant, who was made rich by the favour of his disciple Hureka Bhye, resided at Mhysir; he was allowed a palankeen, horses, and numerous attendants.

an extraordinary person in a country where women are seldom at all instructed. She was handsome, and of winning manners, but violent in her disposition, and most dissolute in her morals. She appears to have had considerable talent, and sometimes displayed great resolution: but the leading feature of her character was a cruelty of disposition, which seems almost irreconcileable with that seclusion in which she had been brought up, and in which, contrary to the example of Alia Bhye, (whose exact opposite she appears to have been in every particular,) she continued till her death.

The reason commonly assigned for Toolzah Bhye keeping behind the curtain* was her youth and beauty; but it is perhaps as much to be referred to her immoral character. She was at first not so shameless as to brave the world, and she knew that if it were publicly known that she was a woman of abandoned character, it would have injured if not destroyed her influence as a ruler. The example of Alia Bhye had created a prejudice in favour of power being vested in a fe-

* The word Purdah, which means curtain or veil, is often metaphorically used, and implies that seclusion in which many females in India live: but in this and similar cases where ladies transact business, the expression must be taken literally, as they are seated behind a curtain, where they hear and are heard, and through the openings of which they see without being seen.

male, and was at first an advantage to Toolsah Bhye; but the delusion soon passed. Every act of the latter shewed that she had all the frailties and vices of her sex without any redeeming virtues; above all, she wanted that noble confidence which purity of mind bestowed upon her predecessor.

Meenah Bhye has already been noticed. She had been the servant of Mulhar Row's mistress, Hureka Bhye, and, like her, the disciple of the Maun Bhow priest Adjeebah. She was now the confident of Toolsah Bhye, and maintained a complete influence over her young mistress, chiefly by flattery, and by ministering to her pleasures. The chief passion of this woman, who was above sixty years of age, was avarice; and she amassed very large sums, for all were obliged to bribe her who desired her assistance. She was also a devotee, but her devotions were rigidly limited to the practices of her sect; and this made her more an object of aversion to orthodox Hindus, with whom that sect are considered impious; but these were compelled to conceal their feelings, as Meenah Bhye was prompt to revenge either insult or injury.

Balaram Seit, the minister of this court, was by tribe a Bunniah, or merchant*; he had belonged,

* The tribe to which he belonged is denominated Aggerwalah. His family came from Jagoor in Hurriana; but he was born, or at least brought up, at Malligaum in Candeish.

in a subordinate capacity, to the office charged with superintending the weighing and supplying of grain for Jeswunt Row's cattle. When that chief proceeded to the Punjab, Balaram was raised to a higher station, and the confidence in him was such that he was employed as a negotiator of the peace * with the British government. His success on this occasion recommended him so much to his master, that he became, from causes which have been stated, chief minister. There was a mixture of pliancy, of falsehood, of good nature, and ambition, in this man's character, that singularly suited him to the times, and to the part he had to act. He never possessed property, and had, from the first, nothing to lose. He promised every thing that was asked; and, though he hardly ever performed what he promised, there was a kindness of manner and apparent goodness of heart about him, that prevented men being outraged even when they were duped. He always appeared better, and really was so, than any other on the scene; and while his easy disposition made him obedient and attentive to Toolsah Bhye, and her favourite Meenah Bhye, he was considered by others as the only check on their profligacy. Though living in the midst of mutinies, and his person generally under restraint, he was still regarded kindly by the

* In A. , this minister negotiated with me the peace betwe and the British government.

troops, to whom he gave what money he could raise, usually adding a promise that all he could obtain for the future should be theirs. He consented, in fact, to be their agent, and probably was often satisfied to have the plea of their turbulent violence as a pretext for exacting contributions to supply their demands. With such a regency and such a minister, commanders like Ram Deen *, and a rebellious and disorganized army, the condition of the country may be imagined. Neither the rights of the sovereign nor the subject were respected; every where the same scene of oppression presented itself; open villages and towns were sacked, and walled towns battered, till they paid contributions. Leaders who had been successful were, in their turn, attacked and plundered by those that were more powerful; constant engagements took place between the troops of Sindia, Holkar, the Puar, and the Pindarries, while the Rajpoot princes and the predatory chiefs joined, or deserted, the different parties, as it suited their interest at the moment. The Bheels, a tribe who are born plunderers, encouraged by the absence of all regular rule, left their usual mountain fastnesses to seek booty in the open plain, and the villagers, driven to despair, became freebooters, to indemnify themselves for their losses by the pillage of their neighbours. Such a state of affairs could

* For this man's character, vide p. 76.

not long continue: hordes were soon forced from the scene of desolation to seek subsistence in distant lands. None of Holkar's territories escaped the general ruin of this period, which also involved those of the Nuars of Dhar, and Dewass, of the Nabob of Bhopal, and partially those of Sindia, and of all the Rajpoot States, except Kotah, which, from causes that will be hereafter noticed, rose amid the general wreck to increased wealth and prosperity.

During the very height of this distraction Jeswunt Row died at Bampoora. Before his death Toolsah Bhye, who had no child, adopted, and brought up as her own offspring, Mulhar Row Holkar, the son of Jeswunt Row by Kessairah Bhye*, a woman of low tribe, who had been introduced into his family. This boy was placed upon the Musnud immediately after his father's death, and his title was universally acknowledged. Zalim Singh, the able Regent of Kotah, came to Bampoora to present in person his offering to the young prince. A.D. 1811.

Two months after the death of Jeswunt Row, an attempt was made against the authority of Toolsah Bhye, of which Dowlet Row Sindia was supposed the author. A relation of this prince, named Juteebah Mania, entered the

* Kessairah Bhye, the mother of the reigning Prince, is of the Koomar, or pot-maker tribe of Hindus.

service of young Mulhar Row, and through him three battalions, commanded by Juggoo Bappoo, were detached from their allegiance, and, on the pretext of demanding arrears, marched to Bampoora to support a plot, of which Emah Bhye and Lara Bhye, two ladies of the Holkar family, were proclaimed the ostensible leaders. It had been settled that Lara Bhye * was to adopt Mohiput Row †, the son of Anund Row Holkar, the Jaghiredar of Jallein, whose claims from descent, it was argued, were preferable to the illegitimate son of an illegitimate father, who had been placed upon the Musnud by a combination of wicked persons, anxious only about their own interests. This plot was defeated as soon as discovered. Ghuffoor Khan acted on this occasion a very conspicuous part; he proclaimed himself, in the name of Ameer Khan, the defender of the young Mulhar Row, and was not only joined by all the

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* Emah Bhye was the widow of Mulhar Row, who was killed at Poona; and Lara Bhye, the wife of Jeswunt Row.

† Mohiput Row was a youth of about seventeen years of age. He fled, on the failure of the plot, to Candeish, where he afterwards attempted to make a party; but the small body of followers which he had collected were attacked and defeated by Ramdass, the brother of Balram Seit. No subsequent account is given of this pretender to the Musnud of the Holkar family; he is believed however to be living somewhere in the Deckan, in an obscure condition.

ministers, but by Zalim Singh, who was still at Bampoora. The battalions of Juggoo Bappoo were first compelled to retreat, and afterwards disarmed and plundered. The unfortunate Emah Bhye and Lara Bhye, who had little, if any, concern in the plot, were put to death. Juteebah Mania fled, but his property was seized and plundered. Some lesser criminals were executed, while Juggoo Bappoo escaped (probably as being a Brahmin) from farther punishment than a long and rigorous confinement.

The repeated mutinies of the troops, and the danger that ensued, led to the deputation of Dewan Gunput Row with propositions to Sindia, which included the offer of a mortgage of a portion of the Holkar territory in return for a pecuniary aid. Dowlet Row is stated to have listened with pleasure to this, as he did to every proposal, that gave him a prospect of attaining a supremacy in the Holkar government. An engagement was accordingly entered into, and the Dewan returned accompanied by agents from the principal bankers in Sindia's camp, who had instructions to make arrangements for satisfying the claims of the troops, whenever the deeds for the countries specified were made over to Sindia. But Ghuffoor Khan, who saw in the completion of this plan the destruction of his own and his master's influence, after consulting with

his friends, (particularly with Tantia Jogh *,) summoned Ameer Khan from Joudpoor to defend his own interests and those of the Holkar

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* Tantia Jogh, the present minister of the Holkar family, is a Brahmin of the Karadee † sect, was born in Candeish, but came young to Mhysir, where his elder brother, Balajee Naich, was Comasta or agent in the house of Hurry Punt Jogh, then one of the principal Soucars in Malwa. The affairs of this Soucar (whose name the young Brahmin had taken as a distinguishing appellation) went to ruin after the death of Ahia Bhye; but Tantia having been attached to an European commander of one of the Campoos or legions, became his confidential man of business, and joined to the management of the countries assigned for the support of this body of troops, the sole charge of providing funds for their payment. He continued attached to the infantry of Holkar's army till the murder of the English officers, before Jeswunt Row invaded Hindustan. On the occurrence of this event he left the army, and retired to Oojein. He rejoined it when it returned to Malwa, and remained in the exercise of his business as a Soucar (which he has always continued) under the protection and friendship of Balaram Seit. The violence of Dherma prevented Tantia Jogh from having any concern with the Campoos, while that person commanded; but on his death he was appointed to the general charge of the battalions, whose organization was changed, and from this station he gradually rose to influence and power.

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† For an account of this sect and their usages, vide Transactions of the Bombay Literary Society, Vol. III. page 86.

state. The Patan chief hastened to court, and effectually succeeded in frustrating the negotiation.

Toolsah Bhye was greatly irritated at hearing from Ameer Khan that she had been represented to him as an abandoned woman; and the enemies* of Tantia Jogh persuaded her that he was the author of the calumny. Her immediate resolution was to put him to death, and nothing but the vigilance and decision of his friends† enabled him to escape her vengeance. He went to Kotah, where he remained for some months. After Ameer Khan left camp, the plan of obtaining Sindia's aid was revived, and by the advice of Balaram Seit and Meenah Bhye, Tantia Alikur was despatched to Gwalior. He concluded an engagement, by which it was agreed, that an annual sum of twenty-four lacks of rupees should be paid by Sindia, on countries equal in revenue being made over to that prince. This second negotiation was defeated by a variety of events, but more especially by a general mutiny of the whole army, which first compelled Toolsah Bhye to fly with the young Mulhar Row to the

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* Tantia Alikur was the person who chiefly excited the Bhye against Tantia Jogh upon this occasion, and it naturally caused an irreconcileable hatred between them.

† Ghuffoor Khan gave Tantia Jogh the first intimation of his danger, and aided his escape.

tent of Ghuffoor Khan, and afterwards to seek shelter from the excesses of the troops in the fort of Gungraur, a possession of the Holkar family, which had been temporarily assigned to Zalim Singh, Regent of Kotah.

Tantia Jogh, who had returned from Kotah supported by all the influence of Zalim Singh, began at this period to take a very considerable lead in the affairs of government. He was, however, nearly being ruined by a plan which Meenah Bhye had concerted, to seize him and others in order to pay the troops with the plunder of their property, and place the administration in the hands of Ram Deen. The latter had just arrived at Gungraur with his corps, and was accompanied by his brother,* who was not only possessed of property, but from being the renter of several large districts, had connected himself with some of the richest bankers at Oojein, one† of whom had accompanied him to Gungraur for the

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* This man, whose name is Mukhum Lâl, commonly called Joshee, is well educated, and a man of business. He has long been a prominent actor in scenes of rapine, and by that and other means has acquired considerable property. He is at Oojein, and was offered by Dowlet Row Sindia the management of several countries, if he could obtain my consent to the measure. This he has tried every effort to effect; but it was always refused on account of his bad character.

† Bugwunt Doss, a man of wealth and respectability.

purpose of giving the troops who supported the projected change an adequate security for their arrears and future pay.

Every court has its secret history, and that of several in India, if disclosed, would exhibit strange scenes of intrigue and licentiousness. Nothing could be more wicked and shameless than the daily occurrences which that of Holkar* exhibited at this period. The profligacy of Toolsah Bhye was notorious, but the criminal intercourse established between her and the Dewan Gunput Row, which now became quite public, was attended with the most serious consequences. Tantia Jogh has been accused of having secretly advised the Dewan to consult his own safety, and that of the party to which he was attached, by encouraging the passion which Toolsah Bhye had conceived for him; and though he, no doubt, endeavoured to impress the parties with a sense of the necessity of circumspection, he could not have desired the decrease of an influence through which

* The licentious passions of Jeswunt Row Holkar brooked no controul: and the sacrifice of the honour of the females of their family was no unusual road with courtiers to his favour. The handsome wife of Gunput Row was considered as the principal link between that minister and his prince. The same lady, at the period of which I am writing, openly intrigued with Tantia Jogh, and was the chief means of preserving the good understanding between him and her husband.

he and his friends enjoyed power. Their first object was the ruin of Meenah Bhye, which Toolsah Bhye, who was the slave of her passions, and who had now become extravagantly fond of her lover, appears to have agreed to without any scruple. In compliance with the suggestions of Gunput Row, her former favourite was made prisoner.

Tantia Alikur was at this period on his return with agents of Sindia's government, attended by the bankers, who were to make the necessary advances, and give security for the annual payment of the pecuniary aid that Sindia had agreed to grant. His progress, however, was arrested at Kotah, by the intelligence that not only his principal friend and supporter Meenah Bhye was in confinement, but that Ram Deen, the military commander on whom they reposed most confidence, was also a prisoner, and had not only been compelled to deliver up to his enemies the money he had brought to promote his own aggrandisement, but was made over to the most clamorous of the horse in the service of Holkar, as security for their arrears.

Toolsah Bhye after these occurrences moved from Gungraur to camp: some money was given to the troops; and in a few days the whole proceeded to canton for the rains near Mucksee, a town on the river Kali Sind. Ram Deen and

Meenah Bhye were carried prisoners with the army; a discussion about the release of the former, caused a dispute between Tantia Jogh and Ghuffoor Khan, which was increased by the latter having given his protection to Tantia Alikur, who now ventured from Kotah, and endeavoured to form a party to remove Toolsah Bhye, and advance her prisoner, Meenah Bhye, to the head of the government. Balaram entered into this intrigue, influenced, as his friends pretend, by the disgrace brought on the family of Holkar, from the open and shameless intimacy between Gunput Row and Toolsah Bhye. But the latter and her paramour (a man of no talent *) now acted under the able direction of

* In a conversation regarding the Dewan that Major Agnew had with Tantia Jogh, the latter observed, "Gunput Row "personally is, and always was, a weak despicable man." This speech of Tantia Jogh would appear tolerable evidence, that while he shared the counsels of this man and Toolsah Bhye, he ruled them: but the friends of the minister do not admit this to be the case. I asked Rowjee Trimbuck, Tantia's most confidential man of business, if Gunput Row was not a weak man, and consequently a mere tool in the hands of such a person as Tantia Jogh. He answered quickly, "Gunput Row is one of those half fools that are "most difficult to be managed; they do what they are told in "most things, but every now and then put in a piece of work "of their own, which spoils all; besides (he continued) the "Dewan often acted to please Toolsah Bhye, who, though full

Tantia Jogh, who advised the immediate removal of Meenah Bhye. This lady, who, though confined, had been hitherto treated with indulgence and respect, was now the victim demanded by Gunput Row, and his mistress could not refuse. The female she had so long cherished was dragged away at night, in the midst of a violent storm of rain, to be carried to Gungraur. She entreated to see her mistress for the last time; and her importunities were so violent, that they took her to the door of the latter's tent, where she implored admittance, if it was only for a few moments; but the unfeeling Toolsah Bhye, instigated by Gunput Row, who was standing near her, exclaimed aloud so as to be heard by all, "Do not let her come in, take her away." She was carried first to Gungraur, and from thence to Beejulpoor*, where she enjoyed but a few days' repose, when a bill upon her for a considerable

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"of sweet and persuasive language, and at times witty, had "no sense in affairs of state, and no controul over her tem- "per, which was very violent, and led her often to very cruel "acts."

* Beejulpoor, which is within three miles of Indore, had been granted to Meenah Bhye, who made it over to Hurrabal, her spiritual father, who is still in possession of this village, and lives in some state, though his receipts from its revenue have been diminished. This priest accompanied Meenah Bhye in her last journey.

sum was given to some officers of the household troops, with instructions to exact payment. Torture of every species was inflicted, and though she refused from the first to give one rupee, she did not deny having amassed wealth. "Take me to Toolsah "Bhye," she often exclaimed, "and if she personally requires ten lacks, I will give them." This meeting, however, was exactly what her enemies desired to avoid; and their tortures were continued till the object they sought was accomplished. Meenah Bhye, distracted with hunger and pain, finished the scene by taking poison; but her resolution not to benefit those who wrought her destruction, was persevered in to the last.* Soon after this occurrence, the general mutiny of the troops, and their threatened violence, compelled Toolsah Bhye to make her escape from camp, which she did with difficulty, and again took shelter in Gungraur, which Zalim Singh had a short time before made over to her possession.†

Toolsah Bhye, the instant she reached Gun-

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* None of Meenah Bhye's treasure was found. She had, for better security, removed it beyond the Holkar territories; and a great proportion of it is believed to be still in the hands of a banker at Kishengur near Ajmeer. Tantia Jogh is quite satisfied this man possesses a large amount, and has made many efforts to recover it, though hitherto in vain.

† Zalim Singh had rented the district, but, on a larger rent being demanded than he chose to pay, had given it up.

graur, took very decided steps. The artillery and some corps of infantry were still attached to her. By the terror of the former, she compelled the Mahomedans of the army, with the exception of a small corps, and that of Ghufloor Khan, to move to a distance, and she proclaimed that Hindus alone should be hereafter admitted into the service of Holkar. This was done on the pretext that the Mahomedans had been the most turbulent; but the fact was, these mercenaries were attached to the standard of Ameer Khan, and she now accounted that chief as her principal enemy. These proceedings gave rise to a violent attack upon her authority. A plot was formed to take from her the custody of the young prince, in the possession of whose person all her strength consisted. The infantry corps, as well as the artillery, gave their support, and detachments surrounded the houses of both Tantia Jogh and Gunput Row before they were aware of any danger. The Dewan was made prisoner; but Tantia escaped, with about forty followers, into the citadel, where Toolsah Bhye resided. He immediately made arrangements for its defence; and Jotteebah Naick, a Mahratta commander of the household troops, who was a favourite of Toolsah Bhye, made an effort on this critical occasion to aid her, that reflects honour on his character. The instant he learned her situation, he hastened

from the camp to the town with two hundred men, scaled the wall at a place where it was low, and succeeded in reaching without opposition the outer gates of the citadel. This was guarded by a company of the mutineers, who were surprised and attacked with such fury, that they were all either killed or wounded. He was warmly welcomed by Tantia and Toolsah Bhye: the latter was, when he entered, sitting with a dagger in her hand, holding the child Mulhar Row, whom she said she was resolved to stab to the heart rather than allow him, in whose name she governed, to be taken from her. But the danger was passed; the rapid success of Jotteebah struck such a panic into the infantry, that they instantly moved off to their lines, leaving the town to be occupied by the Mahratta horse; who, hearing of the affray, came galloping from their encampment to the aid of Toolsah Bhye. Ghuffoor Khan also repaired to one of the gates; but he was justly suspected of being one of those who had excited the revolt, and was in consequence warned to keep at a distance; he attended to the counsel given him, and retired to his tents.

Although this plot was for the moment defeated, the motives which induced the artillery and infantry to become the instruments of its execution, still remained. They continued clamorous for their arrears, and as one mode of hastening

the payment, they increased the rigour of Gunpat Row's confinement; nor were they mistaken in the effect which they expected this would produce. Toolsah Bhye, when she heard of his situation, became inconsolable, and implored Tantia Jogh to make his utmost efforts to release the Dewan; she did more, she gave jewels to a considerable amount to effect this object. Tantia managed to raise some more funds, and a compromise was effected. The men engaged in this mutiny, who amounted to about three thousand, after releasing their prisoner, and giving over their guns and arms, and taking hostages for the security of their lives and property, took their discharge, and withdrew from this scene of never-ending trouble to their respective places of abode in Hindustan.

The success of the corps abovementioned, in extorting their arrears by the violent measures they pursued, brought almost all the infantry* of Holkar's army to Gungraur. Plots and mutinies were revived, and Balaram Seit was suspected not only of having instigated past proceedings, but of giving encouragement to the commanders to persist in their clamorous demands. Whether this was the case, or that it was

* Thakoor Doss says, that in the space of ten days after these mutinous Sepoys returned to their homes, three battalions, commanded by Roshun Beg, Roshun Khan, and Hussein Allee, arrived at Gungraur.

determined to destroy him, cannot be well ascertained; the latter is most probable. The support he received from Ameer Khan, his connexion with Tantia Alikur, (who, though he had again fled, was still dreaded,) and his intrigues with Ghuffoor Khan, gave reason to believe his holding any office was incompatible with the firm establishment of the party now in power; but his life might still have been spared, had he not excited the resentment* of Toolsah Bhye by some serious and repeated remonstrances against the continuance of an open and criminal intercourse with the Dewan, which had become, as he stated, the scandal of all India, and brought shame and disgrace upon the family of Holkar. How much she had been inflamed by his reproaches may be inferred from the circumstances that attended his murder; for it can hardly be called an execution. He had been watched, and not allowed to leave the town of Gungraur, from the moment the mutiny commenced; but he had only been in strict confinement three days, when

* Thakoor Dosa, when questioned on this subject, ascribes Toolsah Bhye's inveterate hatred to Balaram, first, to the danger her favourite had incurred through his seditious practices; secondly, to his intrigues with the late Hindustanee horse, by which he gained and kept them in his interest; and, lastly, to his advice and animadversions on her most licentious conduct.

he was sent for at midnight by Toolsah Bhye, who received him, attended by Gunput Row and some servants. Balaram was asleep when the order was brought for him to attend. What had passed before, the hour of the night, and the language of the messengers, combined to make him suspect what was contemplated. His family took the alarm, and his wife endeavoured by her tears to prevent his obeying the mandate. He put her aside, telling her to cease her lamentations, and not to endeavour to make him guilty of disobedience. He nevertheless, when he came before Toolsah Bhye, pleaded hard for his life: representing the inutility of killing a man who had no property to be plundered, and who had yet the power, from the credit he had acquired, of satisfying a mutinous soldiery. He entreated to be spared, if but for a few days, till it was seen whether he could not allay the violent ferment that then existed among the troops. This representation was answered by accusations and invectives from Toolsah Bhye, who abused him as the chief author of the calamities to which she had been recently exposed. It was in vain he denied the facts alleged.* She exclaimed, "Strike off his head."

* Among other crimes, she accused him of having sent a dress to Roshun Beg, as a mark of approbation of his proceedings.

Two Sepoy orderlies* who were present, when asked by Gunput Row, "if they did not hear the orders of their mistress," had the resolution and virtue to answer, "They were soldiers, and not executioners." On receiving this answer, Gunput Row drew his sword, and made the first blow at Balaram: two attendants† aided him to complete this act of atrocity; the body was dragged into a dark room, and a report spread next morning that the minister had absconded, but no one was deceived.

The chief actors in this scene were Toolsah Bhye and Gunput Row. Public opinion ascribed a share of their guilt to Tantia Jogh; and the leading influence he had at this period, and continued to exercise, gave currency to this belief.‡

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* The names of these men are Deen Singh and Lal Singh; they are still in the service.

† Hussoobah Huzooriah struck the second blow, and the body, after being hacked, was dragged away by Bheem Singh Bondelah. The murderers stripped it of some ornaments, and the Dewan is said to have been base enough to take a jewel necklace as his share of the spoil.

‡ Rowjee Trimbuck, Tantia's most confidential adherent, asserts, that his master was throughout averse to the murder of Balaram Seit; and though he admits that a serious breach between Tantia and the two guilty individuals, Gunput Row and Toolsah Bhye, did not take place till a year afterwards, when it was effected by the intrigues of Sreeput Row, during Tantia's absence in Zalim Singh's cantonment, he says,

He was not, however, present at the murder, and from the first denied participation in its execution. The deed produced a sensation of great horror. Balaram's character has already been given. He possessed such a cheerfulness of mind, so great a desire to do good, and so forgiving a spirit, that, in spite of his faithless promises and erring ambition, he was a favourite with all ranks; he is to this day regretted, and his assassination spoken of as an act of barbarous atrocity.

Ghuffoor Khan, on hearing what had passed in Gungraur, sent a confidential person * to Tantia

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that a great coolness occurred while the court was at Gungraur, owing to Tantia Jogh having exacted an oath from Toolsah Bbye, before he aided her in effecting Gunput Row's release, by which she solemnly pledged herself to abstain from an intercourse which brought scandal on the family, and disgrace on all who supported her. Rowjee Trimbuck adds, that Zorrawurmull Soukar first informed Tantia of Balaram's danger, owing to Toolsah Bbye's resentment at his communications with Rosbun Beg, and from believing him the real author of Gunput Row's imprisonment; that Tantia spoke to the Dewan, and, while he recommended Balaram being kept in confinement, he entreated his life should not be touched. He says, that no person could be more surprised than Tantia was, at Balaram's being put to death in so sudden a manner; but that he could not express his feelings, having no place of safety but the post he occupied. Rowjee Trimbuck says, he was at Mundissor, raising money, when these events occurred, but is positive of the facts being as he states.

* This statement was taken from an actor in the scene; but

Jogh, to ask him how he could, after their promises to each other, be concerned in such a proceeding, and desired to know what he was to say to Ameer Khan. Tantia denied all knowledge of the event he alluded to, and stated his belief that Balaram was still alive, though in confinement. On the messenger requiring a more satisfactory explanation, Tantia informed Gunput Row and Toolsah Bhye of what had passed; and

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I afterwards obtained the relation from Mootee Ram, the person employed by Ghuffoor Khan on this occasion. The following is his evidence: Ghuffoor Khan, three days after Balaram was confined, sent me to Toolsah Bhye to enquire after him. She said, "I have no idea of injuring Balaram, but wished to get "his accounts settled and then release him." On that night Balaram was slain.—Next day Ameer Singh came and told Ghuffoor Khan of the event. I was sent to Tantia to know what had occurred. Tantia said the Bhye had told him that Balaram had fled. On my urging the question and professing incredulity, the minister went to the Bhye, and soon after sent for me; but before I arrived, a Huzoorjah, or confidential officer, had been called and asked by the Bhye how he came to allow Balaram to escape. He made an excuse of having fallen asleep. Orders were given to flog the man, and he had received several stripes, when I asked Tantia Jogh "what was "the use of such a proceeding, when he well knew Balaram "was murdered." We were now close to the Bhye, to whom the minister repeated my observations, and my obstinate disbelief of their assertions. On this the Bhye lost all patience. "Is Ghuffoor Khan," she said, addressing us, "my master, or "my servant? If he is so desirous of seeing Balaram, let him "come, and I will engage a meeting shall take place at the

a farther attempt was made to convince him that the minister was still alive, but, not succeeding, Toolsah Bhye, who appeared now to have cast off all fear as well as shame, said aloud, "Is Ghuffoor "Khan my servant, or my master?" and, without waiting for a reply, added, "Go, tell him from "me, if he continues so very anxious about "Balaram, to come here, and they shall meet." Ghuffoor Khan was not a little alarmed at this message; and two days afterwards, hearing a report that an attack upon him was meditated, he marched to some distance. Toolsah Bhye immediately sent to know the reason of this movement, and to give him every assurance of her cherishing no unfriendly intentions. He agreed to return; but, instead of taking up his old ground, he encamped near Roshun Beg's battalions. Three

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"battery where Balaram is now sitting." His body had been just conveyed to a casement in the battery to which she alluded. "I instantly," Mootee Ram said, "took leave, with no "slight fear for myself; for she was in a very great rage."

When a reconciliation took place between Ghuffoor Khan and Tantia Jogh, the former, to conciliate the latter, denied having given Mootee Ram (the above evidence) any authority to be so importunate, and he was dismissed as a man who had disobeyed his orders. He went into other service, and for some time lived with Captain Briggs; but the moment the guarantee of his Jaghire made Ghuffoor Khan independent of the minister, he recalled Mootee Ram, who is now his principal Moonshee, or writer. Such facts are conclusive.

days afterwards, Toolsah Bhye, observing some agitation in the camp, which indicated an intention to surround Gungraur, moved out of that town with all the Mahratta horse. The impatience of Jotteebah* Naick brought on an affair with the infantry, in which Roshun Beg, supported by Ghuffoor Khan, took a leading part. A cannonade was opened, and Toolsah Bhye is said to have displayed courage, till a shot struck the howdah of the elephant on which the child Mulhar Row was seated. This spread a general alarm, and Toolsah Bhye instantly mounted a horse, and placing the prince on another with Gunput Row, commenced (accompanied by the household and Mahratta horse) a flight which was continued to Allote†. The battalions under Roshun Beg moved on Gungraur, of which they took possession. Their first object was to discover the corpse of Balaram, which, though in a putrid state, was burnt by persons of his caste, according to the ceremonies prescribed by his religion. Gungraur was on this occasion completely plundered; the troops were paid part of their arrears, and their commanders (particularly Roshun Beg) enriched.

There can be little doubt that throughout the

* The Mahratta chief who had behaved so gallantly in her defence at Gungraur.

† A town in Soandwarrah belonging to the Puars of Dewass. It is sixteen miles South-west of Gungraur.

whole of the events which took place at Gungraur, the mutinies of the troops were made subservient to the intrigues of Ameer Khan and his agents, who desired to deprive Toolsah Bhye of power; the consequence was a complete separation of her interests from those of the Patan chief and his partizans. Tantia Jogh now became the head[a] of one party, and Ghuffoor Khan of another. The former had only the Mahratta and the household troops, but the possession of the person of the young Mulhar Row gave it a predominance; for so strong was the feeling on this point, that those who had charge of him were deemed (even by their opponents) to be the Government. The party of Ghuffoor Khan consisted of his own adherents, the discharged Mahomedan horse, whom he had recalled, and nine battalions of infantry, with their guns.

One of the earliest measures of Tantia Jogh was to contract an engagement with Sindia's manager at Mundissor, by which he obtained the aid of Ambajee's Campoo, or legion, (one of Sindia's corps employed in Malwa,) which consisted of five battalions and thirty pieces of cannon. A monthly sum was agreed to be paid for the subsistence of this force; but Ambajee's operations

[a] Gunput Row was too inferior in talent to be his rival; and Toolsah Bhye, except when acting from the impulse of passion, was always under tutelage.

were too cautious, and his object was so obviously directed to avoid hostility, that Holkar's court soon became disgusted with its new allies.

Sindia and Ameer Khan were alike anxious to turn the distractions of the Holkar state to their own advantage. The former sent an agent to Ameer Khan, entreating him to desist from measures that would ruin and disgrace the Holkar family, and requesting him to comply with the desire of Toolsah Bhye for the removal of Ghuffoor Khan. The Patan chief was too averse to the interference of Dowlet Row to acquiesce; but he was nevertheless solicitous to bring affairs to an amicable termination. He in consequence gave orders to Ghuffoor Khan to suspend hostilities, and assured Toolsah Bhye, that if she would consent to his repairing to court, and cease flying about the country, he would compel the infantry to be satisfied with one half of their arrears, and would recall a representative who was so obnoxious to her. In this negotiation Ameer Khan was supported by Zalim Singh of Kotah, who offered to become security for the full performance of the proferred engagement; but Toolsah Bhye concluded, and on just grounds, that Ameer Khan's purpose was to deprive her of power, and to assume the sole management of affairs: in her answer, therefore, to his overture, she insisted that Ghuffoor Khan should be recalled, and the battalions brought to order, as preliminaries. Ameer

Khan made every effort to effect the latter object, but in vain; and a renewal of hostilities was only avoided by both parties agreeing to refer to the decision of Zalim Singh, the Regent of Kotah. The army of Mulhar Row marched to within twelve miles of the cantonment of that chief, to which place Tantia Jogh was deputed. Ghuffoor Khan came soon after on the part of Ameer Khan; and three months passed in a series of reconciliations and quarrels between the parties, and in making and breaking promises and oaths; but the intelligence received at the close of the
A.D. 1817. rainy season, of the advance of the British armies towards Central India, effected for the moment a reunion of interests, which nothing else could have accomplished.

Zalim Singh had now his own safety to consult, and was eager to get rid of friends who might embarrass, but could not assist him. It is to the honour of Tantia Jogh's character, that the wise and experienced Regent of Kotah selected him, at this crisis, as the man best able to combine and direct the discordant adherents of Holkar; and as a proof of his own friendship, he sent a detachment of three hundred infantry, with two standards, for the avowed purpose of protecting his person.

Before the events, which now hastened affairs to a crisis, are detailed, it will be necessary to notice an influence which had long been employed in

vain endeavours to unite the courts of Sindia and Holkar, and to restore, by the reunion of its different chiefs, the former strength of the Mahratta confederacy.

The controul, which the notorious Trimbuckjee* established over the councils of Bajerow, may be fixed as the date from which that prince changed his policy, and commenced his intrigues against the British government. These assumed a more serious aspect, when the murder of Gungadhur Shastree† had placed the infamous favourite in the situation of a proscribed malefactor. The engagements between Sindia and Holkar, first negotiated by Gunput Row, and afterwards by Tantia Alikur, have been already narrated. The mutual obligation and determination of the parties to serve and obey the Paishwah, is made, in the first article of the treaty‡, the bond of their faith to each other. There can be no doubt that, though the object was to confederate against the English, it

* The complete ascendancy of Trimbuckjee in the councils of Bajerow may be dated from A. D. 1815.

† Gungadhur Shastree, the minister of the Baroda state, came to Poona to negotiate a settlement of accounts between his master and the Paishwah through the mediation of the English government, under whose protection and guarantee he was deputed. He was murdered by Trimbuckjee under circumstances which left no doubt that the deed was perpetrated with knowledge of Bajerow.

‡ Major Agnew's letter to the Chief Secretary to Government, under date 31st August, 1818.

was intended to proceed slowly and with great caution; but the situation of Bajerow precipitated a rupture; and, as he became every hour more alarmed respecting himself and his favourite, he was urgent in his endeavours to obtain immediate and efficient assistance. Agents were in consequence sent to Sindia, and a man of some eminence reached Holkar's court * about the same time. He was received with marked
A. D. 1815. honour, being met by all the ministers; but the state of affairs was unpropitious to union in any cause, and the intrigues and struggles for power which took place after the death of Balaram Seit, baffled all his efforts in favour of Bajerow. That prince sent in the beginning of the ensuing year
A. D. 1816. another agent†, who joined Holkar's camp a short time before the ministers and chiefs had referred their disputes to the Kotah Raja. This second envoy, while he professed to have a large command of pecuniary resources, expressed perfect confidence in his ability to bring Sindia and Ameer Khan to concur in the measures, to the

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* This person, whose name was Gmput Row, was generally called Gunoobah Punt. His arrival and honourable reception the camp at Mukra on the 4th of Assar in the year of the Sumb hut 1783, charged with a letter from the Paishwah, is reported in a letter from Mr. Wellesley, acting Resident at Gualior Mr. Secretary Adam, dated 20th February, 1816.

† The name of this man was Dhoondoo Punt Tanea, assumed, for concealment, the name of Krishen Row.

adoption of which he urged the ministers of Mulhar Row; and, after remaining some time at the cantonment of Zalim Singh, he proceeded to the camp of the Patan chief, who did not reject his proposals, but demanded an advance of four lacks of rupees. The payment of this sum was agreed to, and a letter was sent to Holkar's camp, directing the necessary bills to be transmitted. This delay proved fatal to the negotiation. The approach of an English army decided Ameer Khan A.D. 1817. to accept the offers made by that government; and after his first interview with Sir David Ochterlony, he dismissed Bajerow's agent, and wrote to Ghuffoor Khan, to desire he would urge Toolsah Bhye not to think of going to the Deckan, but to wait his arrival in camp, when he would adjust all differences between her and the English.

Such was the result of the Paishwah's negotiation with Ameer Khan; but the intrigues of the former's agents were more successful at the court of Holkar. An artful Brahmin*, who was an hereditary servant in the family of Gunput Row, had accompanied the mission from Poona, and laboured to promote its success. The absence of Tantia Jogh with Zalim Singh gave this man an opportunity of increasing a coolness which had for some time subsisted between that minister and the Dewan; and the instant the mind of the latter

* Sheopot Row.

was turned against his friend, Toolsah Bhye adopted similar sentiments. This party was strengthened by the accession of some of the military leaders, who were secretly excited, soon after Tantia's return to camp, to seize his person, as a security for their arrears.

The party, who now directed the councils of Holkar, having pledged themselves to adopt Bajerow's cause, they received an advance of one lack and sixty thousand rupees from the agent of that prince, a part of which was distributed to the troops, while the intention of proceeding to the Deckan was proclaimed, and orders sent for all corps and detachments to join without delay. This took place in November; and early in the ensuing month the whole assembled about twenty miles from Mahidpoor, to which place they afterwards
A. D. 1817. marched. All were now in high spirits, for the Dewan and his friends were lavish in their promises of high and regular pay, after the army had crossed the Nerbudda; but the intelligence of the arrival of a division of the British army at Aggur*, a distance of about fifty miles from Mahidpoor, and of another† having penetrated into Malwa, made a serious impression on their feelings.

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* My corps reached Aggur on the 4th December, 1817.

† The first division under the command of Sir T. Hislop crossed the Nerbudda on its march to Oojein on the 1st December, 1817.

Thakoor Doss, the news-writer at Holkar's court, employed by Mr. Metcalfe, the resident at Delhi, had been despatched with a letter to that gentleman, containing general professions of friendship; but no definite propositions were made. The state of affairs was, however, now changed, and it was necessary to take some decided measures. A council was held, of which Tantia Jogh (though a prisoner) was president. He advised the deputation of a respectable person to communicate with the English officer commanding the troops at Aggur; but his advice was not approved, and it led to an accusation of having intrigued with the English, which not only prolonged his confinement, but increased the severity of his treatment. He was particularly obnoxious to the commandants of the infantry corps, who, as well as the principal leaders of the cavalry, went, after this council, to the tent of Ghuffoor Khan, and interchanged pledges of fidelity, by which they bound themselves to union during the dangers that were approaching.

A correspondence was entered into with the British* officer commanding the division at Ag-

* I had, on my arrival at Aggur, written a letter to Mulhar Row of a friendly nature, but meant to bring his ministers to a clear explanation of their sentiments, as far as these affected the British government. Before this reached them, a letter had been sent to me, written in the name of the young prince, which contained nothing but mere general expressions of

gur, who, while he moved to join the army of Sir Thomas Hislop near Oojein, stated to the ministers of Holkar, that if they were really desirous of peace they should send a mission to the head-quarters of that General. This step was adopted, and agents came, vested, as they said, with full powers to negotiate a treaty. The most liberal terms* were offered; but the complete reform of a mutinous infantry was insisted upon, and the ministers were told, when they urged their inability to controul this body as an excuse for non-com-

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* ... and a call upon me, as a former friend of the family, to preserve the ties of peace. I had offered in my letter to ... an officer to wait upon Mulhar Row; but, receiving ... answer, I moved towards Oojein by Turanah, whence ... addressed a short note to the Dewan Gunput Row, informing him of my intended junction with the Commander ... of Sir Thomas Hislop, and warning him, if he desired to ... danger, to lose no time in entering into a negotiation. These were comprised in ten articles, as detailed in the ... of conference between Holkar's Vakeel and myself on the ... December, 1817. Their moderate purport was to restore ... government of Holkar to a condition in which it could be ... ated by other states; and this necessarily included a com... separation from the Pindarries, a reduction of a great pro... on of a mutinous army, and, in short, the abandonment of ... predatory system, the pursuit of which had been found ... le to the tranquillity of other states. The English govern... offered a gratuitous aid to effect this desirable change, ... so far from desiring any cession of territory, engaged to assist Holkar's government with funds to pay the arrears of the troops it was called upon to discharge.

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which had been made; and those who desired a
rupture, urged the leaders of the Mahr
to provoke it by daily depredations on the cattle
and followers of the British army. The day be-
fore Sir Thomas Hislop advanced to Mahidpoor,
his videttes were attacked, and every movement
evinced determined hostility. This result had
been anticipated from the intelligence received
of the circumstances which had just taken place at

* Toolsah Bhye was alarmed by the surrounding scene;
and her favourite Gunput Row was too perplexed with various
councils and parties to give her any support in this trying
emergency.

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ar Row Holkar, where
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of the murder of Balaram. The
antia Jogh, in consequence of his
treatment, are supposed to have made him
an active promoter of this plot, and his confine-
ment did not deprive him of the means of being
se he leading executive persons were the
principal officers of the Pagah, or household troops.
A person, acting under the direction of the com-
mander* of that body, enticed young Mulhar Row
from an outer tent where he was playing, and a
guard was at the same instant placed over that
of Toolsah Bhye. Gunput Row came to her
relief; but, on learning that the prince had
been separated from her, he saw at once the
extent of the plot, and, turning back, mounted a

* Sudder-u-Deen, the Havildar, or commander of the
Pag h.

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horse and attempted to escape; but a party of his enemies came up with him in the bed of the Seepra river. He was slightly wounded with a spear before he was thrown from his horse, when he was plundered, insulted by blows, and, after being treated with every species of indignity, conveyed a prisoner, amidst hoots and execrations, to the infantry lines.

This happened on the morning of the 20th December. A more tragical scene took place at night. The death of Toolsah Bhye appears to have been early determined on, for the guards placed over her were so strict, that all access was prohibited. This hitherto arrogant female now refused sustenance, and passed the day in tears: and, when she was seized to be carried to the banks of the river, (the place fixed for her execution) she is stated to have implored those who conveyed her to save her life, offering her jewels as a bribe, and loading others with the guilt of which she was accused. It was near the dawn of day when this occurred; and many who were asleep in the quarter of the camp where she was, were awakened by her cries; but to use the emphatic expression of a person who witnessed this scene, "not a foot stirred, and not a voice "was raised, to save a woman who had never "shewn mercy to others." She was taken from her palanquin on the banks of the Seepra, where her head was severed from her body, and the latter

was thrown into the river, being denied even the common rites of a Hindu funeral.

Toolsah Bhye was not thirty years of age when she was murdered. She was handsome, and alike remarkable for the fascination of her manners and quickness of intellect. Few surpassed her in a fluent eloquence, which persuaded those who approached her to promote her wishes. She rode (an essential quality in a Mahratta lady) with grace, and was always when on horseback attended by a large party of the females of the first families in the state. But there was never a more remarkable instance than in the history of this princess, how the most prodigal gifts of nature may be perverted by an indulgence of vicious habits. Though not the wife of Jeswunt Row, yet being in charge of his family, and having possession of the child, who was declared his heir, she was obeyed as his widow. As the favourite of the deceased, and the guardian of their actual chief, she had, among the adherents of the Holkar family, the strongest impressions in her favour; but, casting all away, she lived unrespected, and died unpitied.

Ghuffoor Khan is implicated in the death of Toolsah Bhye, from his being known to have cherished feelings of active resentment against her. Tantia Jogh was also hostile to her: and those in whom he most confided were busy actors in the scene. Keissurah Bhye, the mother of Mulhar Row, was too deeply interested to have

escaped suspicion. That the junto of military leaders who at the moment had usurped power, were not the only persons concerned in this deed of violence, there can be no doubt; for, though it had their full concurrence, the act, which was deliberate, was not executed by soldiers, but by the persons whose duty it would have been to put to death any state criminal: and that it is not deemed a reproach by those who now enjoy power, is proved by the men who acted as the executioners of Toolsah Bhye still holding their places in the service of the Holkar family*.

On the day Toolsah Bhye was seized, the British army had advanced to within ten miles of Holkar's camp on the banks of the Seepra, near Mahidpoor. A tumultuous council was held, in which the military chiefs decided that it was advisable to hazard an action on the favourable ground they then occupied. On the morning of the 21st of December, a considerable body of horse crossed to the right bank of the river to meet the British troops. On the day before, a short letter had been addressed to Mulhar Row Holkar, warning him,

A.D. 1817.

* Rowjee Trimbuck was asked who were concerned in Toolsah Bhye's death? He said, he believed every one in Holkar's camp desired it, except Gunput Row and Ram Deen. The executioners were the two Jemadars of Mewattees, Sadut Khan and Mohdeen Alee. The former died five months ago. The latter commands a party of two hundred infantry, who form the guard over the palace of Mulhar Row, at Indore.

for the last time, of the dangers of his situation. An answer was received, when the army was on its march. It was in the former style of evasion, and after some general expressions, concluded by a short sentence written in a spirit not to be mistaken. "If you will advance," the young prince was made to observe, "recollect it is the army of "Holkar." However much the chiefs had before differed, a sense of common danger, and a feeling connected with the reputation of the army to which they belonged, led upon this occasion to a momentary union. They had sworn fidelity to each other on the night of the 20th, and on the ensuing morning the order of battle was skilfully arranged. The horse which had crossed to the right bank of the Seepra, took a position that was well calculated to embarrass the operations of the advancing army, by occupying its attention, and threatening its stores and baggage; while the infantry and cannon, covered by the remainder of the cavalry, occupied a strong and well-connected line, protected on the right by a deep watercourse, and on the left by the abrupt bank of the Seepra. The horse that had crossed the river were commanded by Ram Deen; the infantry were under Roshun Beg; while the Pagah or household troops under Sudder-u-Deen, and Ghuffoor Khan with his personal adherents, remained around the young Prince in the rear of the whole.

The attention of the British army was from

the first directed to the storming of the heavy batteries of guns*. All skirmishing and partial actions were avoided; and the troops having crossed the river, formed under cover, where they remained till the advance of the right of the line upon the enemy's left (the strongest point of his position) gave the signal for a simultaneous attack; which, after a short period of sharp conflict, was successful in every quarter. The army of Holkar fled in great confusion. The horse, who had shewn much boldness at the commencement of the day, were the first to leave the field, when the action grew warm; and both they and the infantry gave way, before the artillery ceased its destructive fire.

Mulhar Row was in the action upon an elephant; and, according to all accounts, behaved with spirit. When he saw his troops flying, he burst into tears, and entreated them to return. His cousin, Hurry Holkar, is said to have shewn much gallantry. He had cut down two Mysore horsemen, when his horse was shot, and the young prince called out with great anxiety to remount his relation. These anecdotes are remembered as proofs, that, young as its representatives were, they displayed on this memorable occasion, that courage, of which its adherents boast as the prominent feature of the family of Holkar.

* About seventy.

The flight of the army continued through the night, in the direction of Seeta Mhow, which they reached early next day. Tantia Jogh and the Dewan Gunput Row had made their escape from their guards, when the battalions were routed, and found a temporary refuge in the town of Mahidpoor; which they left during the night, and joined Mulhar Row; whose mother, Keesurah Bhye, being now the acknowledged head of the government, sent for Tantia, and giving him an honorary dress as minister, placed her son, and the interests of the family, in his hands. From Seeta Mhow the army marched to near Mundissor, where a body of Pindarries under Kurreem Khan were encamped. This chief offered his services, but his alliance was not now desired. The English were in pursuit, and every hope of successful resistance, or even protraction of the campaign, was at an end.

Meer Zuffer Ally, who had been before employed as an agent*, was sent from Seeta Mhow with overtures of peace; the draft of a preliminary treaty was given to him, and he was in-

* Meer Zuffer Ally was the agent of Chuffoor Khan, who took at this time a very decided turn, refusing to accompany the court in their flight. He had received letters from Ameer Khan urging this conduct, but he was chiefly swayed by his own interests. He obtained the reward he sought, in the Jaghire he held from Holkar being confirmed, on condition of his supporting a body of horse.

formed that when he returned with the signed, hostilities should be suspended. He arrived at Mundissor with this engagement executed a few hours before that fixed for the march of the British troops * to attack the remains of the Mahratta army, which was encamped at a distance of only sixteen miles, near Pertaubghur. Nothing but this seasonable submission could have saved them from destruction. By it the blow was completely averted. Tantia Jogh came to camp next day; and on the sixth of January the treaty of Mundissor was concluded, by which the family of Holkar, though it abandoned its claims upon the chiefs of Rajpootana, its lands in the Jeypoor country, and its territories † South of the Satpoorah range, attained, through the support of the British government, the actual possession of its remaining countries. This was, in fact, a new condition to the Holkar state; for twenty years had elapsed since it had enjoyed any regular resources, or government,

* My division, which had been detached from Mahidpoor in pursuit, had reached Mundissor on the morning of the 31st of December, and my preparations were made to march at night, and fall upon the enemy next day, who, from his condition and situation, could not have escaped.

† The rights of the family in its native place, Wanbahaun in the Deckan, and as Daishmookh of Chandore, were subsequently ceded by the considerate generosity of the Governor General.

and its name during the greater part of that period, had only served as a pretext to plunderers for committing every species of excess and crime.

The good effects to be anticipated from the great change made in the condition of this principality by the peace of Mundissor, were justly appreciated by some of the adherents of the family; but the Mahratta horse, the moment they heard the treaty was signed, hastened in a body to the Southward to join Bajerow, who was still in arms. They were commanded by Ram Deen*, who had an additional motive for his desertion, from the irreconcileable nature of his quarrels with Tantia Jogh, whose recent elevation was confirmed by his having become the negotiator of peace with the British government.

The remains of the battalions defeated at Mahidpoor, had gone to Rampoora, where they were surprised and routed, and their remaining guns captured by a corps under General Browne. The new minister, and others who had thrown themselves decidedly upon the British protection, did not deplore an event† which disembarrassed a

* Ram Deen surrendered when Bajerow did, and disbanded his followers: this and his agreeing never to return to Malwa have obtained him a pension of three thousand rupees per annum from the British government, in whose territories he now resides.

† The treasury of the Holkar state had been for years empty, and the jewels of the family, which were once very valuable,

bankrupt state of a mutinous soldiery, and cancelled a number of old and troublesome claims.

The transactions of the period that elapsed from the insanity of Jeswunt Row until the conclusion of peace between his son Mulhar Row and the British government, have perhaps been noticed more in detail than they merit; but they exhibit a remarkable picture of a state in which every tie but that of opinion was dissolved, and which continued, through the influence of habitual feelings, to have the name, after it had substantially lost all the reality of a government. A respect, almost sacred, for the person of their prince, was the only sentiment which, throughout these scenes of confusion and violence, appears to have been participated by all; and it for a time shielded those who had charge of him from the punishment due to their crimes. His name (though a minor) was the only rallying point left; but there was in this disorganized community, as in others constituted of similar materials, always a disposition to reunite, which gave to such a centre of common attachment more than ordinary importance. The events narrated have utility in another view: most of the actors are still on the

had been greatly diminished. There is good reason to conclude there were not twenty lacks of rupees lost at the battle of Mehidpoor. At first this loss was greatly exaggerated, but subsequent minute enquiry has reduced it to a much more moderate amount.

stage, and from the scenes in which they have borne a part, we may form some judgment of what is likely to be their future conduct.

It is, however, now necessary to revert to one, who, though a professed dependant of Holkar, rose, amid the revolutions and changes which have occurred during the last thirty years in India, to an importance that demands a notice beyond that which has been incidentally given to him in this chapter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ameer Khan.

AMEER KHAN is a native of Sumbul in the province of Mooradabad. His father was a Moollah, or priest, and possessed a small property in land. Ameer Khan and his younger brother Kurreem u Deen left Hindustan when the former was about twenty years of age; and that he was of some consequence in his native town, is established by his having ten adherents, with whom he entered into the service of the Zemindar * of Ranode in Aheerwarrah †. He was afterwards retained by a Mahratta officer ‡ of the Peishwah, who had the management of some districts in Malwa; and from this employment he passed into that of another § collector of revenue. In all these services Ameer Khan and his followers

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* Deleep Singh.

† This tract of territory, which contains many districts, lies on the North-east frontier of Malwa.

‡ The name of this officer was Dojee. He was collector of the Pury Mahal of Aroun, Tonyn, &c. near Scrouge.

§ Nuttee Khan, manager of Shujahalpoor.

were employed as Sebundy, or local militia, with an average pay of three or four rupees a man, and from ten to fifteen to him as their commander. Brighter prospects, however, soon opened to the young soldier. The troubles which ensued at the petty court of Bhopal, on the death of the minister Chuttr Khan, led to the entertainment of a number of men by the different parties; and Ameer Khan, with six horsemen and sixty foot, was enlisted by Hyat Mahomed Khan *; with whom he remained about twelve months, when he joined Doorjun Lal and Jye Singh, ex-chiefs of Ragooghur, who, expelled from their country by Dowlet Row Sindia, subsisted by plundering the fields they had once cultivated.

Ameer Khan distinguished himself in one of the first actions that these Rajpoot chiefs had with their Mahratta enemies; in consequence of which he was raised to the command of five hundred men, presented with a palanquin, and became a personage of some importance in this predatory army, which consisted of about fifteen thousand men. But his farther advancement was

* He was entertained by Hirnut Row, the Dewan of Hyat Mahomed Khan. By a strange change of fortune Hirnut Row afterwards became the Dewan of the Jemadar, when the latter was raised to the rank of Nabob; and the son of this Hindu (Duttee Rain) is at the present moment the principal man of business of Ameer Khan.

prevented by an affray with some Rajpoots, in which he was so severely wounded by stones, that he lay three months at Serounge before he had strength to move out. This affair led to his separation from Doorjun Lal, and his entrance into the service of the Mahratta chief, Balaram Inglia, who was at the same crisis deeply engaged in the disputes at Bhopal.

Balaram Inglia increased Ameer Khan's party to fifteen hundred men, and confided to him the fort of Futtyghur, which he was obliged to abandon, as has been before stated; but this seeming reverse in his fortune proved its happiest juncture, for it led to his adopting the cause of Jeswunt Row Holkar, as the associate of whose fortunes he rose to a fame that made him for many years eminent among the disturbers of the public peace.

The connexion of Ameer Khan with Jeswunt Row Holkar was first that of equality; but the rank of the latter, his being at the head of a sovereignty, and his more energetic character, soon established the relations of prince and dependant. Jeswunt Row, however, always continued to call the Patan leader his brother, and to treat him in a distinguished manner from that shewn to his other officers. Ameer Khan was sole commander of his own army, entertained and dismissed whom he chose, and this made him in a degree independent; but his condition was little to be en-

vied. His followers, who were always much more numerous than he had any means of paying, were in a state of constant mutiny, and for more than half of every year their chief was under restraint; the consequence was, that his conduct was always more regulated by the clamours of this turbulent rabble, and the necessity of providing for their support, than by any regular system of policy. The excesses of Ameer Khan's Patans at Saugor have been noticed; but that was far surpassed at Poona, where he was seized by a party
A. D. 1803. of them, and not only beat and bruised, but almost strangled with his own turban which they fastened round his neck. Though Jeswunt Row repressed and punished this act of violence*, he too was compelled, on many occasions, to soothe and humour the turbulent spirits of the freebooters. Hindu feeling was outraged by their continuing to slaughter cows† close to the city

* Jeswunt Row seized and confined Gheus Mahomed Khan, and some offending Patans, who committed this outrage. He desired to put them to death, but Ameer Khan interceded, fearing the consequences of such a step among a race whose sense of honour impels them to revenge real or supposed wrongs.

† The cow is a sacred animal with the Hindus, who not only abstain from eating the flesh of cattle, but deem killing them a capital crime, and it is constantly punished as such. The Mahrattas of the lowest tribe have this feeling. D. B. Sindia, when I was at his court, A. D. 1802, offered an additional cession of territory, if I would introduce an article in his treaty

of Poona; and the license they ostentatiously exercised in this particular may be received as a proof of the insolent and domineering spirit, in which they acted on all occasions. It was the constant object of Jeswunt Row to employ them at a distance; and he appears to have considered them more as a body of plunderers, whose general movement he could direct through his connexion with their leader, than as an integral portion of his army, whose services he could at all times command. They, on the other hand, were sensible of the advantages they derived from acting in the name of one of the recognized India governments; and the main influence by which Ameer Khan retained his precarious rank as their chief, was his forming the link that attached this band of depredators to the house of Holkar.

The history of Ameer Khan is comprehended in that of Jeswunt Row till their separation after the return of the latter from Hindustan. He at that period entered the service of Juggutu Singh, Raja of Jeypoor, who engaged his aid in an approaching contest with the Raja of Joudpoor, for the disputed hand of the daughter of the Odeypoor

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with the British, that should prevent their slaughtering cows within the limits of the territories he had been compelled to cede; and though it was a period of famine, several persons were executed for killing cows.

Rana *. The latter family is the highest in rank among the Rajpoots, and an alliance with it has always been esteemed the greatest honour to which a prince of that tribe can aspire. The princess Kishen Kowur added to her high birth the reputation of extraordinary beauty. She had been betrothed to the deceased Bheem Singh, Raja of Joudpoor. On his death Maun Singh †, a distant

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* The celebrated but now fallen family of the Rajas or princes of Odeypoor are considered by many (I believe erroneously) to be descended from Porus, who opposed the progress of Alexander the Great. There can, however, be no doubt that they are among the most ancient and renowned of the princes of India, and that they formerly possessed the whole of that tract now termed Rajpootana, or the country of the Rajpoots, which is situated between the Western part of the province of Agra and the North-east of Guzerat. It has Malwa as its boundary to the East, and the Sandy Desert to the West. Its extreme length is computed at 330 miles, and its breadth in the broadest part 200. The chief states are the Rajas of Jeypoor, Joudpoor, and Odeypoor. The territories of the former are the most fertile. Those of Joudpoor, or Marwar, as it is more commonly called, are still very extensive; while Odeypoor, or Mewar, is now a limited and desolate principality, but it is fast reviving under the liberal protection it has received from the British government. The whole of Rajpootana is a succession of hills and narrow valleys.

† It was settled at Maun Singh's elevation, that if any of the Ranees had a son, he should be Raja. This posthumous pretender to the throne was not brought forward for two years; and the circumstance of the reputed mother (Sevai Singh's sister) denying the fact of its being hers, and his being brought

relation, succeeded to the throne; but two years afterwards Sevai Singh (who had been minister to Bheem Singh) brought forward a real or supposed son of that prince, in support of whose claims he formed a strong party; and as one means of accomplishing his ends, he used every effort to render the princes of Joudpoor and Jeypoor implacable enemies. With the knowledge that Maun Singh cherished hopes of obtaining the hand of the Odeypoor princess, Sevai Singh instigated Jugguth Singh*, the Raja of Jeypoor, to demand her in marriage, and this prince, inflamed by the accounts of her beauty, fell immediately into the snare. A negotiation was opened with the Rana of Odeypoor for the hand of his daughter, and the marriage seemed at one period

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forward by Sevai Singh, a discontented minister, has led to a belief, that the child Dhokul Singh was spurious. The point, however, appears never to have been clearly established.

* Jugguth Singh was a weak, dissolute prince, who devoted himself to sensual pleasures. The history of his low amours, and of those who were elevated by him as favourites, would be received as an incredible tale. Ruskapoor, a Mahomedan dancing-girl, was raised to the first rank in the principality. He followed himself in her train of attendants, and gave her great estates. The high Rajpoot females of his family were ordered to salute and visit her as their superior; but they rejected the command, offering to swallow poison or stab themselves if he desired it, but they never would, they said, condescend to the degradation of placing themselves on a level with a female of her character.

certain: but the art of Sevaé Singh was farther employed to prevent such a result, and the Raja of Joudpoor was excited not only to insist upon his prior claim to the hand of the disputed princess, but to adopt violent measures to arrest the progress of his rival's suit.

It is neither necessary to detail the intrigues that took place, nor to enter into the particulars of the war that ensued; every feeling that could excite Rajpoot princes to desperate hostility was inflamed, and assistance was solicited from all quarters. The British government was in vain intreated to interfere.* Sindia gave his countenance to enable two of his most unprincipled partizans, Bappojee Sindia and Sirjee Row Ghatkia, to subsist their predatory bands upon the quarrels of these Rajpoot chiefs, while Holkar made them, as has been before stated, the still more baneful present of Ameer Khan and his Patans.

The consequence was, the almost complete destruction of both principalities. That of Jeypoor expended, at the lowest computation, one crore and twenty lacks of rupees in prosecution of this unhappy war, which, although successful

* When I was at Delhi with Lord Lake in 1805, every argument was tried, and every offer made by the Jeypoor Vakeels to engage me to become the advocate of their master's cause, and to give him the support of an English force. Aid from the British government was subsequently solicited by the Raja of Joudpoor, who desired to purchase it by cessions of territory.

at the commencement, terminated in disgrace and defeat.

Sevai Singh, when he saw Maun Singh completely involved, renewed his demand in favour of Dhokul Singh, the posthumous prince, whose pretensions he supported. On the Raja's having recourse to evasion, he not only left him, but prevailed upon almost every other chief to desert: and Maun Singh, who had taken the field, was, in consequence, obliged to fly, attended by only a few adherents: leaving his camp to be plundered by Jugguth Singh and his auxiliaries.

The misfortunes of Maun Singh did not terminate with this reverse: he was pursued to Joudpoor, and his whole country was overrun by his enemies. Dhokul Singh was proclaimed Raja, and the allegiance of almost every Rhattore chief transferred to the young prince. The contest appeared decided, yet still the courage of Maun Singh, and of the few troops who remained faithful to him, was unsubdued. He had early endeavoured to divide his enemies, and the difficulties attendant on a lengthened siege now promoted his efforts. Ameer Khan listened to his overtures; and, on the usual pretext of want of pay, separated from the besieging army, and began to plunder and levy contributions indiscriminately over the districts of Joudpoor and Jeypoor. The interest of almost every chief of the latter state was affected by his excesses in laying waste their lands,

and their clamours obliged Jugguth Singh to detach a force to punish the Patan leader; who at first retreated towards Tonk, but having been reinforced by some battalions and guns, he attacked and defeated the Jeypoor troops. After this success, which was very complete, Ameer Khan was expected at Jeypoor, the inhabitants of which were thrown into great consternation; but on this, as on many other occasions, he shewed that he was only a leader of freebooters. Shunning, from apprehension of danger, the great prize of victory, he contented himself with plundering in the vicinity of the capital, which was out of danger the moment that its inhabitants recovered from their panic.

The intelligence of the discomfiture of the Jeypoor troops spread such dismay and confusion in the besieging army, that Jugguth Singh determined to return to his capital, and offered a large sum to the auxiliaries sent by Sindia to convey him there in safety. The cannon and spoils taken in his first action were sent in front; and some Rhattore chiefs, who had remained faithful to Maun Singh, but, from becoming objects of his suspicion, had been obliged to leave Joudpoor, now determined to give their prince a convincing proof of their fidelity; and having concerted an attack upon the troops escorting the trophies of their country's disgrace, they completely defeated them, retook forty pieces of ordnance, with much other booty,

and, having effected a junction with Ameer Khan, marched with that chief in triumph to Joudpoor.

The fortunes of Maun Singh were restored by these events; but, while his enemy Sevai Singh lived, he entertained the most serious apprehensions. That chief had taken refuge in Nagore. The Raja entreated Ameer Khan to march against him, and made him an advance of two lacks of rupees, promising future wealth and favour as the reward of success in this important enterprise. The Patan leader undertook the service, but seems from the first to have trusted more to art than force, for its accomplishment. He moved to within a few miles of Nagore, and under a pretext of discontent, caused by some discoveries he had made of the ingratitude of Maun Singh, he made overtures to establish a connexion with Sevai Singh. The latter suspected treachery; but the officer employed by Ameer Khan, pledged himself for the fidelity of his commandant, and obtained a promise that he would visit his leader. The Rajpoot chief faltered when the time for fulfilling his promise arrived; but Ameer Khan went to meet him, and succeeded, by protestations and oaths, in lulling him into complete security. The consequence was, he went to the camp of his supposed friend, and was murdered*, with the

* The following is an account of this transaction, as stated by a respectable eye-witness:—

"Mahomed Shah Khan succeeded by his protestations in

great majority of those by whom he was accompanied.

"persuading Sevai Singh to promise a visit to Ameer Khan;
"but when the hour came, the Rajpoot chief, who probably
"had received some intelligence of the designs against his life,
"hesitated. Ameer Khan, when he learned his irresolution,
"mounted, and proceeded with a few followers to the shrine of
"a Mahomedan saint, close to the walls of Nagore. He was
"here joined by Sevai Singh, whom he reproached for his
"fears, and asked him if he thought it possible that a man who
"cherished evil designs, could shew such confidence as he
"had that day done, by placing himself in the power of the
"person he meant to betray? Sevai Singh confessed his error.
"Presents, dresses, and even turbans (a pledge of brother-
"hood) were exchanged, and Ameer Khan swore, at the tomb
"of the saint, to be faithful to his new ally; who was per-
"suaded to go next day to his camp, where splendid prepara-
"tions were made for his reception, and a number of chiefs
"appointed to meet him. The troops were under arms, some
"on pretext of doing honour to the visitor, others apparently
"at exercise. The guns were loaded with grape, and pointed
"at the quarters prepared for the Raja, who with his principal
"adherents, to the number of two hundred, were seated in a
"large tent, when it was let fall upon them at a concerted sig-
"nal, and while the officers of Ameer Khan saved themselves,
"all the Rajpoots were inhumanly massacred by showers of
"grape and musquetry from every direction. Of seven hun-
"dred horse that accompanied Sevai Singh, and continued
"mounted near the tent, only two hundred escaped; the rest
"were slain, and a number of Ameer Khan's people, among
"whom was one of his own relations, fell under the promiscu-
"ous fire of the cannon. Sevai Singh had been killed by
"grape, but his head was cut off and sent to Maun Singh,
"who rewarded Ameer Khan with a Jaghire and a large sum
"of money."

Though Sevai Singh, as the author of a war which brought ruin on his country, may be considered to have merited his fate, that fact in no degree extenuates the deep guilt of Ameer Khan, who evinced on this occasion that he was alike destitute of humanity and principle.

It was during these proceedings that Holkar became insane, and Ameer Khan, after taking and sacking Nagore, was compelled to come to Bampoora. His conduct when there has been narrated, as well as his expedition into the territories of Nagpoor. Some unadjusted disputes between the families of Holkar and Bhonslah were the pretext of this invasion*, but the object was plunder. Ameer Khan had left his infantry and guns at Joudpoor under Mahomed Shah

* Ameer Khan stated that he acted by orders of Holkar's government; but when the Governor-general addressed a letter to Jeswunt Row Holkar, demanding an explanation, one was returned written in the true style of Mahratta diplomacy. That Prince was made by his ministers to disclaim all hostile intentions against the Nagpoor Raja. It was asserted that when Ameer Khan entered the territories of the Bhonslah, he was directed, instead of committing injury, to extend protection to them; and in consequence of the Governor-general's letter, these orders were promised to be repeated. This letter, probably dictated by Ameer Khan himself, admitted the fact of the invasion of this host of freebooters; but added, that it was made with the most friendly views. It suited the policy of the moment to admit this evasion.

Khan; but his ranks, in the plundering excursion he now engaged in, were swelled by all the Pindarries, and by the Nabob of Bhopal, whose hostility to Ragojee Bhonslah made him the forward and zealous ally of that prince's enemies.

The dissolution of the Holkar state, the distractions that prevailed in the government of Sindia, the seditious spirit evinced by many of the Nizam's subjects, combined with the large army under Ameer Khan (whose reputation was now at its zenith), led to a very general conclusion, that he cherished plans of restoring the Mahomedan power; and there can be no doubt, that had he been a man of great talent, either as a statesman or military commander, the period was most favourable; but there is every ground to believe that he at no time seriously entertained any such designs. His Patans were continually exclaiming, that the prediction of a holy mendicant that he would be sovereign of Delhi, was nearly accomplished; but he does not appear to have encouraged such expressions or sentiments; and not only professed to act in the name of Holkar, but never took one step towards establishing any power beyond that of the leader of a predatory army, which it was his object to keep together, and subsist, by every means that the prevailing anarchy placed within his power.

After Ameer Khan returned from Nagpoor,

and relieved Jeswunt Row and his family from Dherma Kowur, he became the chief actor in a tragedy, in which a good end was obtained by a deed which revolts every feeling of humanity. A reconciliation between the Rajas of Jeypoor and Joudpoor was an object of just and wise policy; and it suited the views of the Patan chief to promote its accomplishment. It was proposed, that this should be effected by a double marriage. Jugguth Singh was to espouse the daughter of Maun Singh, and the latter the sister of his rival and enemy. To propitiate these nuptials, it was conceived that the honour of all parties required the death of Kishen Kowur, the princess of Odeypoor. The question of this sacrifice was agitated when Ameer Khan was at Odeypoor, and that chief urged it strongly on the counsellors* of the Prince, representing the difficulty of establishing peace while the cause of the war existed, and then pointing out the impossi- A. D. 1810.
bility, without offending the two most powerful Rajpoot rulers in India, of giving his daughter to any other chief. To these he added arguments well suited to the high, though mistaken, pride of a Rajpoot, regarding the disgrace of having in his

* He is stated never to have proposed it direct to the Rana. The Thakoor Adjeet Singh, of Koorawa, was the Rajpoot lord, who is reproached with being his instrument upon this memorable occasion.

family an unmarried daughter. It is stated, and for the honour of human nature let us believe it, that neither arguments nor threats could induce the father to become the executioner of his child, or even to urge her to suicide; but his sister Chand Bhye was gained to the cruel cause of policy, and she presented the chalice to Kishen Kowur, intreating her to save her father, family, and tribe, from the struggles and miseries to which her high birth and evil destiny exposed them. The appeal was not in vain: she drank three poisoned cups, and before she took the last, which proved instantly fatal, she exclaimed, "This "is the marriage to which I was foredoomed." All were acquainted with what was passing in the palace; and the extraordinary beauty and youth of the victim excited a feeling, which was general in a degree that is rare among the inhabitants of India. This account is written from the report of several persons who were on the spot, and they agree in stating that the particulars of Kishen Kowur's death were no sooner spread through the town of Odeypoor than loud lamentations burst from every quarter, and expressions of pity at her fate were mingled with execrations on the weakness and cowardice of those who could purchase safety on such terms. In a short period after this tragical event, the public feeling was again excited by the death of the mother of the princess, who never recovered the shock she re-

ceived at the first intelligence of the fate of her beautiful* and cherished daughter. If it is to the disgrace of the nobility of Odeypoor that one of them (Adjeit Singh, a man of high rank, who possessed unbounded influence over the mind of his prince) proved base enough to act throughout as the instrument of Ameer Khan, the character of this proud race was redeemed by the conduct of Sugwan Singh, chief of Karradur, who, the moment he heard of the proceedings in the palace, hastened from his residence to Odeypoor, and dismounting from a breathless horse, went unceremoniously into the presence of his prince, whom he found seated with several of his ministers in apparent affliction. "Is the princess dead or alive?" was his impatient interrogation: to which, after a short pause, Adjeit Singh replied by intreating him "not to disturb the grief of a father for a "lost child." The old chief immediately unbuckled his sword, which, with his shield, he laid at

* I visited the court of Odeypoor in March 1821, eleven years after the occurrence of the events I have stated, and possessed complete means of verifying every fact. I could have no doubt of the beauty of Kishen Kowur, after seeing her brother Juan Singh, the present heir to the Musnud, whom she is said to have exactly resembled. His complexion is very fair, and his features are fine; and though they have that softness which characterizes Hindu physiognomy, they are full of animation and intelligence.

the feet of the Maha Rana*, saying, in a calm but resolute tone: "My ancestors have served yours "for more than thirty generations, and to you I "cannot utter what I feel; but these arms shall "never more be used in your service. As to "you, villain!" he exclaimed, turning to Adjeit Singh, "who have brought this ignominy upon "the Rajpoot name, may the curse of a father "light upon you! may you die childless!" He retired from the assembly, leaving, according to the account of those that were present, an impression of awe and horror in the minds of all who heard him. Sugwan Singh lived for eight years after this occurrence; but, though he continued in his allegiance, he never could be prevailed upon to resume his arms. The last child of Adjeit Singh died a short time ago, and the event was deemed by the superstitious Rajpoots a fulfilment of the curse that had been pronounced upon him. He maintained his influence over the mind of his weak prince till very lately, when he was disgraced†, to the joy of the inhabitants of Odeypoor, who continued to consider him as the chief cause of the self-murder of their regretted princess.

Ameer Khan proceeded from Odeypoor to

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* Maha Rana means Great Prince, the title by which the rulers of Odeypoor are always distinguished.

† The intelligence of his disgrace, and the sentiments of joy it had caused, were communicated to me by Captain Todd, Political Agent at Odeypoor, in June 1821.

Joudpoor; and from the period that the disputes between the latter and Jeypoor were settled, his Mahomedan bands ranged over every part of Rajpootana that presented the slightest hopes of plunder. These scenes of pillage were only interrupted by occasional mutinies of the troops, the quarrels of their commanders, and the protracted resistance of fortified places. A. D. 1812-13. A. D. 1814-15.

A few years had brought the principality of Joudpoor to the lowest state of poverty and distraction, when the minister Indraj, aided by Deonath, the spiritual instructor* of Maun Singh, who exercised complete influence over the mind of that prince, determined on an effort to clear the country of its destroyers. Ameer Khan was desired to depart. He did not refuse to do so, but he urged an immediate settlement of his pecuniary claims. This was complied with to the extent of the ability of the state, and all appeared in the best train of arrangement. The Patan chief had left the town, and a few of his troops only remained to enforce some payments which were still due. These had placed Indraj in restraint; and in an affray which ensued, both that minister and the Hindu priest were slain by these turbulent men, whose insolent and domineering habits had now reached such an extreme as gave colour to the protestations of Ameer Khan, that he was

* The name of this man was Goroo (priest) Natjee.

innocent of this crime; but there is every reason to conclude it was perpetrated with his knowledge, and indeed by his direction. Maun Singh was so shocked and alarmed at this proceeding*, that he instantly affected the condition of a religious recluse, whose mind was abstracted from all worldly concerns. He spoke to no person, allowed his beard to grow, and soon had the appearance of one who, though he continued to exist, was dead to all the cares and interests of life. On his remaining some time in this state, his son Chutter Singh (who is supposed to have been concerned in the murder of the minister and priest) took upon himself the duties of the government, and exercised them till his death, which happened about two years ago, when his father, confident in the protection of the British government, recovered from his feigned insanity, and reascended the throne.

Ameer Khan did not return to Joudpoor. He was, during the ensuing two years, sufficiently occupied in plundering Jeypoor, against one fort †

* He was particularly affected at the murder of his Gooroo Deonath, to whose tenets (those of the Jullender sect) he had devoted himself, to the great offence of his relations and subjects. This religious feeling is supposed to have led Maun Singh to prefer strangers, and to form his guards, and other corps, of Patans, Gosseins, &c. instead of confiding, as his ancestors had done, in his Rhattore soldiers. To this source most of the misfortunes of his reign are to be traced.

† Maddoe Rajapoor.

of which he had been engaged for nine months; and he was found carrying on this siege with a mutinous army, when the British force under Sir A. D. 1817.
David Ochterlony advanced into Rajpootana to co-operate in the general suppression of that predatory system, of which he and his adherents were deemed the principal supporters. The Patan chief had no prospect of successful resistance, and the terms proposed and accepted were to him personally most liberal; for, while they provided for the dispersion of the numerous mass of plunderers that had formed what was termed his army, they made a princely provision for its commander. All the countries he held from the Holkar state were confirmed (making nearly an annual revenue of fifteen lacks of rupees), and the fort and district of Rampoora have since been added as a gratuitous boon from the English government.

Ameer Khan had cherished some expectations that were disappointed; and this, added to the discontents and reproaches of his disbanded followers, kept his mind, for a period after he had submitted to the proffered terms, in a state of great irritation, which, however, appears to have subsided. The generosity of the Governor-general has, no doubt, aided to produce this effect: but the Patan leader is a cautious calculator: his prudence has sometimes brought suspicion on his courage, and the chief, who abstained from hostility with the British government when he might have mar-

shalled half the plunderers of India under his standard, is not likely again to disturb the general tranquillity. Besides, as far as regards impression, which was his principal source of power, the illusion is dissipated; and it may be asserted, that few men ever retired from a scene of great operations less respected than Ameer Khan. By the court of Holkar he is naturally viewed as a person who has deserted and despoiled the sovereignty, to which he owed his rise; and when he desired to interfere * as a mediator between this government and the English, both before and subsequent to the treaty of Mundissor, a rancorous feeling of hostility was evinced by all parties against him; yet it must be acknowledged, that, if there be any redeeming good quality in Ameer Khan, it is the regard and friendship he uniformly shewed for his friend and prince (for he acknowledged him as such), Jeswunt Row Holkar. This attachment led him to make every effort to wean the latter from his dissolute habits †. It made him most zealous to

* I received, both before and subsequent to the treaty, several letters from Ameer Khan, expressive of his anxious desire to interfere in the affairs of the Holkar state, which I told him, in answer to every communication, never could be permitted.

† The dissipation of Jeswunt Row Holkar appears to have reached its height at Poona, where the intoxication of victory, aided by a large supply of cherry-brandy, of which he was

recover him from insanity; and in the action with Dherma near Sadree, Ameer Khan, as has been stated, exposed his person in a manner that did honour to him. The most prejudiced of Ameer Khan's enemies gave him the merit of this attachment, and of steady friendship to Zalim Singh, the able Regent of Kotah.

The past life of Ameer Khan has received more notice, from his furnishing an example of a chief at the head of a numerous armed rabble, who subsisted during a long period upon the quarrels of the weak and distracted native states of India. A few observations will throw light on his character and condition.

Ameer Khan sought and obtained lands for his support, but he never, though he had frequent opportunities, kept for himself any of the many fortified places which came into his possession; nor does it appear that he ever cherished views of establishing a separate and independent power. This may, perhaps, be regarded as a proof of his judgment. His success in such an attempt, would at all times have been very problematical, and his failure would have reduced him to complete insignificance. He well knew the insecure foun-

immoderately fond, led to great and shameful excesses, with which he was openly and boldly taxed by Ameer Khan. He was not offended at the freedom of the latter, promised amendment, and kept his word for a few days, when he relapsed into his usual habits.

dation on which he stood; for the man who appeared to those at a distance as the head of the Mahomedan soldiery of India, was reminded by the daily mutinies of the rapacious mercenaries under him that he was merely their instrument. Whatever may have been the motives and end of his former actions, the temptations to such guilt are now past; nor can he again have the plea of that necessity which his advocates have brought forward to excuse or palliate his excesses. Let us hope that he will understand his present condition, and seek, by the good management and improvement of his territories, the continued favour and protection of the British government.

CHAPTER IX.

Nabobs of Bhopal.

THE account given of the principal Mahratta families, and of Ameer Khan, comprises much of the history of Central India during the last hundred years; but there were subordinate actors throughout the whole, or the greater part of this period, whose names cannot be omitted without leaving in obscurity much of what relates to that region. A short account of the Bhopal family, and of the Mahomedan leaders of the Pindarries, with a brief notice of the principal Rajpoot chiefs who have been destroyed or who have survived the extension of the Mahratta power, and of the Grassiahs, Soandees, Bheels, and other plunderers who have been raised into importance by the anarchy of the last thirty years, will complete what is necessary on this part of the subject.

Mahomedan and Hindu authorities, though they agree as to the principal facts in the life of Dost Mahomed, the founder of the Bhopal family,

are at variance with regard to several of the details connected with his establishment of independent power.

This chief came, when young, from Afghanistan to Delhi, where he entered the service of a nobleman* of the same Afghan tribe (the Mirajee Kheil) to which he himself belonged. Dost Mahomed appears shortly after his arrival to have quitted the service of his countryman, and entered that of the Emperor Aurungzebe. He was one of a party detached into Malwa, where he succeeded in bringing himself to the notice of the Governor of the province by his gallantry, and was in consequence rewarded by a nomination to the superintendence of the district of Bersiah†, the revenues of which are stated to have been then greatly reduced by the unceasing depredations of freebooters.

The progress of Dost Mahomed subsequent

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* The name of this nobleman was Jelal Khan.

† Bersiah is stated to have only yielded a revenue of fifteen thousand rupees when Dost Mahomed was nominated to the charge of it, which is lower than ever this fertile district has been reduced to during the last troubles. It forms, however, if the fact be correct, a criterion to judge of the condition of the empire during the last years of Aurungzebe.

Bersiah yielded when recovered from the Pindarries in 1223 Fusles, forty-four thousand and nine hundred rupees. This year, 1227 Fusles, its revenue is eighty-five thousand and three hundred rupees. (*Henley's MSS.*)

to this period was very rapid. He obtained his first wealth by a connexion with a Hindu family*, formed under circumstances that have subjected his memory to reproach; and his most partial biographers admit that his efforts to obtain power were unchecked by any scruples as to the means to be employed. His capture of Jugdespoor†; the murder of its Hindu proprietor; his assisting Newal Shah, the Raja of Gunnour, to destroy his enemy the Raja of Chynpoor Barree‡, are deeds

* Dost Mahomed, according to a Hindu writer, had become intimate with Anund Singh, the Hindu Thakoor, or lord of Munghaigbur, who having gone to Delhi on business, left his Mahomedan friend in charge of his affairs and family. Anund Singh died in Hindustan, and when the intelligence of his demise reached his family, his children, who were all young, could oppose no resistance to their Mahomedan guardian, who, it is asserted, converted the whole of the property they should have inherited to his own use. The more favourable account of this transaction state, that Dost Mahomed obtained the daughter of Anund Singh in marriage; and with her inherited the greater portion of her father's possessions.

† The loss of some baggage plundered by the Hindu Zemindar of Jugdespoor, whom his superior the Gond Raja of Chynpoor Barree was unable to punish, led Dost Mahomed Khan to revenge himself by attacking this chief; and he is said to have taken advantage of the family being assembled at a feast, to surprise and massacre the whole of them. The name of this village, Jugdespoor, was changed into Islamnuggur, and became the capital of Dost Mahomed.

‡ The wife and mother of the Raja Chynpoor Barree preferring death to dishonour, fired a magazine, and were killed

which prove the fact, though at the same time they establish the claim to courage and enterprise of this military adventurer. Newal Shah, by whom his advancement was so much promoted, was in turn deceived and destroyed. This Hindu chief had made over the town and lands of Bhopal to the Mahomedan soldier, in order that he might settle there with his family and their adherents, whom he had invited from Afghanistan. Some time after their arrival, Newal Shah was attacked by the Imperial troops, which, however, with the aid of his Afghan auxiliaries, he defeated *. He was on this occasion so well pleased with Dost Mahomed, that he assigned a residence for him and his family in his capital, Gumnour. This imprudent kindness, according to the Hindu narrator, suggested a stratagem (very common in Indian history) which was carried into immediate execution. One hundred Doolies, or litters, close covered, and supposed to contain females and children, were filled with armed men, who were admitted, with

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by the explosion. He himself, however, found means to escape to Seronge, where he was poisoned by a servant for his jewels. A younger son of this family became a Mahomedan, and obtained a Jaghire of twenty-four thousand rupees, which has continued to his descendants.

* The writer here followed asserts that Dost Mahomed took three guns from the Delhi general on this occasion, which are still in the possession of the Bhopal family.

unsuspecting confidence, into the fort, where they rose upon the garrison, and soon made themselves masters of the place.*

Dost Mahomed, after he had captured Gunnour, greatly increased his army, and adopted measures to enable him to preserve the territories he had obtained, which included all that have ever belonged to his successors. He built a citadel within the limits of the town of Bhopal, which he named Futtyghur; and having connected this with the town and inclosed the latter by a wall, gave to the whole a security which was indispensable to the object he meditated, of increasing the population and prosperity of his capital.

About three years before the death of Dost Mahomed Khan, Nizam ul Mulk, who was pro-

* This, though an old stratagem in Indian history, may have been the mode adopted of seizing the place; at any rate there is little doubt that the place was taken possession of by some undue means. It does not, however, appear whether this event took place prior to the death of Newal Shah, or not; the account only states that the Raja of Gunnour had no issue but two nephews, one of whom endeavoured to poison him. He did not succeed altogether, but reduced the Raja to such a state of debility, that he never recovered the use of his faculties. His Ranies survived him many years, the last of them having died subsequent to the death of the Nabob Fyze Mahomed. These ladies were always treated with marked attention at Bhopal.

ceeding towards the Deckan from Malwa (of which province he had been for a short time Governor), sought the friendship of the Afghan chief against the court of Delhi, which threatened him with an attack. Dost Mahomed, from political motives, not only declined the Nizam's alliance, but acceded to the requisition of his enemies, by aiding them with a force under his brother*, who was slain in an action that ensued, in which the Nizam obtained the victory. The Afghan chief, alarmed at having incurred the resentment of so powerful a prince, offered his only son as an hostage for his future good conduct. The Nizam, satisfied with this pledge, left him in tranquil possession of the countries he had subdued and formed into a principality.

Dost Mahomed died at the age of sixty-six. His character is very differently given by Hindu and Mahomedan writers. The former impute cruelty
A. D. 1723. and treachery to him in the capture of Jugdespoor, which is denied by his Mahomedan biographers. The facts, however, of his immediately changing the name of the village to that of Islamnuggur, or the city of the faith, and of the river near it to the Halalee, or the lawful, evince a spirit of bigotry which might at once prove the source and excuse in his mind for crimes that he would otherwise have abhorred. His ambition is

* Meer Mahomed Khan.

admitted by all, and every account agrees as to the combined perfidy and violence by which he gained possession of Chynpoor Barree and Gunnour. He assumed the title of Nawaub after the death of Aurungzebe, and it was amid the distractions of that period that he formed the principality of Bhopal. Whatever might have been his defects, there can be no doubt of his talents. He was deemed, even in a tribe where valour is a common quality, a man of remarkable courage. His life was for more than thirty years one scene of warfare; he had received in action above thirty wounds; and his memory as a soldier is still fondly cherished by the family of which he was the founder.

On the death of Dost Mahomed Khan, the ministers at the petty court of Bhopal elevated Sultan Mahomed Khan to the Musnud, or throne, to the prejudice of his elder, though illegitimate, brother, Yar Mahomed Khan, who had been carried to the Deckan as an hostage by Nizam ul Mulk. The pretext for this act was the absence of Yar Mahomed Khan; but the real motive was a desire to conduct the affairs of the state during a long minority. Sultan Mahomed Khan was a child of seven or eight years of age, while his absent brother was a youth of eighteen or twenty. The attempt, however, was not successful. The cause of Yar Mahomed Khan was espoused by Nizam ul Mulk, and he was sent

to Bhopal with the title of Nabob * escorted by a thousand horse. No opposition was made to his return; but though Sultan Mahomed Khan was compelled by the Patan chiefs to abdicate, they would not instal Yar Mahomed as prince, for being an illegitimate son, on the pretext that the usages of his tribe prohibited his inheriting the name of prince, though there was no objection to his exercising all the royal functions †. The arrangements which took place on this occasion deserve more notice, as they explain the origin of feelings which still exist, and give to the Patan colony at Bhopal a very peculiar constitution. When Dost Mahomed had, after his first successes, invited his brethren and kinsmen to join him, they were accompanied by his elder brother, Akul Mahomed Khan, who being at the head of a party attached to the usages of their country, with a view to keep these un-

* He also received from Nizam ul Mulk the high insignia of the Maha Murat'b, or the dignity of the Fish, one of the first honours of the Moghul empire. This is still assumed as a hereditary honour by the Nabobs of Bhopal.

† Major Henley states in his notes upon the Bhopal family, that the arrangement with respect to Yar Mahomed's succession to power arose from motives of policy, rather than from any precise rule on the subject. Akul Mahomed saw the necessity of complying as much as possible with the wishes of the Nizam; but it was settled that on Sultan Mahomed's entering the Durbar, Yar Mahomed should from courtesy rise to receive him, and moving aside from the Musnud allow him to sit on the right.

changed, established certain rules for the regulation of all their personal and family affairs, which were deemed as imperative upon their chiefs and princes, as upon the most obscure individual of the tribe. Akul Mahomed Khan was first in rank among these Afghans, and his excellent character merited the distinction which his birth and their good opinion assigned him. This respectable nobleman was Dewan, or prime minister. On his death* the office was conferred on Byjeeram, a Hindu, to whom Islamnuggur owes its principal improvements: he built a palace, and augmented its strength by diverting the course of the Parwa, so as to make that river a ditch to its fortifications.

There are few particulars given of Yar Mahomed's life. The murder of Delil Khan, the friend and supporter of his father, is imputed to him; and his seizing upon the possessions of that chief, to the prejudice of his infant children, renders the charge probable. He was succeeded by his eldest son†, Fyze Mahomed Khan, then eleven

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* Akul Mahomed Khan was murdered at the Hoolee. This murder is believed to have been committed at the instigation of his nephew. Akul Mahomed was great-grandfather to Kurreem Mahomed Khan, the present Dewan of Bhopal.

† Yar Mahomed Khan had four sons, Fyze Mahomed Khan, Hyat Mahomed Khan, Yassein Mahomed Khan, and Seid Mahomed Khan.

years of age. The pretensions of his uncle, Sultan Mahomed Khan, were again brought forward by a strong party of Afghan lords. Fyze Mahomed, however, had been placed on the throne, and the army, amounting to five thousand men, remained firm to his interests. Supported by them, he made every preparation to resist the attack with which he was threatened. The Mahjee Sahibah, or lady mother (as the widow of Yar Mahomed was called), despatched a man of religious character, named Shah Allum, with a body of Rohillahs, to seize Sultan Mahomed. The latter at first concealed himself; but in an affray which followed, Shah Allum was killed, and his party repulsed. On this intelligence reaching Iskunnuggur, Byjeeram, with the young nabob and his followers, immediately advanced towards Bhopal: and Sultan Mahomed with his Afghans marched to receive them. Imitating the usage of the Hindu saints and warriors, they dyed their garments with yellow *, the hymeneal colour, which indicated that they went to battle as to a bridal feast, and were determined to die, or to live, exulting conquerors.

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* The flower from which this dye is made, is called, in Hindustanee, Kuswur. To use it on the day of battle is among the Hindus deemed a sacred pledge to die or conquer. Volunteers are often invited to assume the yellow dress, which implies desperation in any undertaking.

Byjeeram, whose numbers were superior, saw with pleasure his enemies quit the protection they had in the walls of Bhopal. He drew up in line of battle; but his troops, who were chiefly Hindus, would probably have been broken by the furious charge of the Afghans, had not these, when exhausted by their first success been attacked, and in their turn routed by the desperate Rohillahs of Shah Allum, who continued faithful to the cause of Fyze Mahomed, and were eager to revenge the death of their late commander. The assailants were, in their turn, defeated; their chief, Sultan Mahomed, fled to Scronge, whence he went to the hill fort of Rhatghur, into which he was admitted by the governor. Here he was immediately besieged by Byjeeram; but the Mahjee Sahibah, or lady mother, seeing the evil of these family dissensions, interposed her authority, through the influence of which Rhatghur with its dependencies was bestowed in free grant to Sultan Mahomed and his descendants; but they were precluded, by the same agreement, from all future pretensions to the sovereignty, or any interference with the management of the Bhopal territory. A.D. 1752.

The termination of these disputes was probably accelerated by a sense of common danger. The Paishwah Bajerow, while returning from Delhi, encamped on the plains between Sehore and Ashta, and required, in the name of the Emperor, whom he represented as Soubahdar, or governor, of Mal-

wa, a restitution of all the lands which the Bhopal Patans had usurped. Resistance appeared unavailing, and the minister Byjeeram negotiated a treaty, by which the Bhopal government made a sacrifice of half its territories to save the remainder. By this engagement, it lost the whole of its possessions in Malwa, except a few towns. What remained, which was chiefly in Gondwarra, was confirmed to the family by the treaty with the Paishwah.

Soon after the departure of the Mahrattas, the discontent of the garrison which occupied the hill fort of Raiseen gave Byjeeram an opportunity of making himself master of that place, which has ever since belonged to the principality*.

Byjeeram, the minister of Fyze Mahomed, was a man of talent, and the country of Bhopal attained a state of considerable prosperity under his management. He conciliated the Gonds †, who are

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* The possession of it was afterwards confirmed by a Sunnud from Delhi, which, as well as the title of Futteh Jung, given at the same time, were paid for by the Nabob.

† This numerous class of Hindus, denominated Gonds from their inhabiting Gondwarra, once held a high rank among the natives of this part of India, but they have been successively reduced by the Mahomedans and Mahrattas to a very low state. This tribe, who inhabit both banks of the Nerbudda from near its source to as far West as Onkar Mundattah, are spread over the greatest part of the Nagpoor territories. They have a language and usages distinct from other classes of Hindus; and their history merits that illustration which it

the aboriginal inhabitants of the Southern portion of the Bhopal territory; and made some amends for the treachery of Dost Mahomed, by bestowing small estates, which their posterity still enjoy, on the nearest relations of Newal Shah, Raja of Gunnour. F. 1158. On Byjeeram's death he was succeeded by his son Gassy Ram, who had only been in office a twelvemonth, when Hyat Mahomed Khan and Yassein Mahomed Khan, two brothers of the Nabob, hurt at his presumptuous deportment and the partiality he shewed to his own tribe*, and taking particular offence at what they deemed his contemptuous refusal to restore their estates, determined to destroy him. Yassein Mahomed Khan became himself the chief actor in the plot: he cut off Gassy Ram's head with his own hand, and received from one of the adherents of the latter two severe wounds.

On the death of Gassy Ram, a Patan named Ghyrut Khan succeeded to the office of Dewan, which he held for six years, when he was poisoned by a courtesan. His successor was Raja

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will, no doubt, soon receive from some of the able British officers employed in the countries of which the Gonds form the majority of the inhabitants.

* Gassy Ram is said by the Afghan biographer to have conferred all offices on his Hindu favourites, and even to have cut off the noses of butchers who attempted to kill oxen or buffaloes; and this account is confirmed by some respectable Hindu writers.

Keisoree, of the Khayasta tribe*, who had been a writer with Byjeeram: he was a man of talent, and the country prospered for fourteen years under his superintendence; but he chiefly owes his celebrity to the circumstances of his massacre.

Fyze Mahomed Khan, who had embraced a life of austerity and devotion, though he had abjured all sensual indulgence, had still a haram filled with ladies: amongst them there was one known by the title of Begum, or princess, a native of Delhi, who became remarkable for her supposed incontinence, and that of her daughters. One of the latter was suspected to have maintained (though in the Nabob's haram) an adulterous intercourse with the son of Keisoree. The Mahomedans do not admit the criminality of the Begum of Fyze Mahomed; they admit, however, that an intrigue was carried on between the son of Keisoree and the daughter of Ashruff Khan, a Patan of high rank, which was detected, and the lady put to death by her family. Either way, a pretext was made by the brothers of Fyze Mahomed for destroying the minister; and they could not have chosen an accusation better calculated to excite the Afghans, whose pride and prejudice were alike inflamed by a belief that the honour of their race was stained by a Hindu.

* This tribe of Hindus, who will be noticed hereafter, are all writers and accountants.

Their rage made the intention of the conspirators so public, that the latter were obliged to have recourse to deceit. A brick was wrapped up in a fine cover as a Koran, and Ishmael, the priest of the family, attended by some of the chiefs, presented it to Keisoree (who appears to have been alarmed) as the most sacred pledge of his safety they could give. He received it as such, and in consequence complied with a request to deliver up the Sicca, or seal, of the state. This act was violently opposed by the principal Hindu leaders of the army, who warned him of the intended treachery, and promised, as long as he had the seal in his possession, to obey all his orders, and to guard him to Fyze Mahomed, to whom alone he should surrender the type of his authority. Keisoree, however, directed them to retire, and not to create a disturbance. He would die a hundred times, he said, rather than be a traitor, and, faithless as he knew the Afghans to be, he seemed (ignorant of the deception that had been practised) to be satisfied with the pledge of the Koran*. He had, however, no sooner come out of the Old Fort, where he resided, than the palanquin in which he rode was

* The chiefs, whom Major Henley interrogated as to this fact, said they did not know whether the priest really presented this sacred pledge or not, but that it was well known that he made every effort to dissuade the chiefs from the assassination of Keisoree.

thrown down, and both himself and his son were murdered in the street. His wife, anticipating his death, had collected the females of the family in one chamber, to which she conveyed a large quantity of gunpowder. A servant brought her intelligence of the murder, when she instantly set fire to the powder, and not only destroyed herself and the remainder of the family, but threw down the house and some of the decayed ramparts of the Old Fort. This explosion, which took place at mid-day, to the horror of the inhabitants of Bhopal, was the first information Fyze Mahomed Khan received of the fate of his minister, whose death he is said to have deplored; but he was incapable of doing more: for his brother, Yassein Khan, the perpetrator of the massacre, immediately assumed the functions of minister of the state. Nabob Fyze Mahomed, who had nominally governed Bhopal for thirty-eight years, did not long survive this event: he died of a dropsy, brought on by his sedentary habits, in the forty-eighth or forty-ninth year of his age. This prince was throughout his life a religious recluse, of very weak intellect, and of an enormous stature, being nearly seven feet high, and his hands, when standing, reached below his knees. He never but once went beyond the precincts of his palace. Ghyrut Khan, when minister, carried him to Bhilsa, which had been for some time besieged, and it happened to fall soon after his arrival. The belief, which the igno-

rant Afghans before entertained of the holy character of their chief, was confirmed by this occurrence, and his memory is revered as that of a saint. Fyze Mahomed had no issue. His brother Yasseib Mahomed was at the head of the government during the few days he survived him. At his death Hyat Mahomed Khan was proclaimed Nabob; but he was also, from disposition and habits, a religious recluse, and the actual exercise of power continued with the person who held the office of minister.

The whole revenue of Bhopal at this time amounted to about twenty lacks of rupees, of which a portion of five lacks value in land was set aside for the support of the Nabob. With this the minister had no concern; it was managed in an office separate from those of the government, and the amount collected was appropriated according to the pleasure of the prince; but, beyond this, he and his personal attendants were considered to have no farther claim on the public treasury, or any connexion whatever with state affairs. The history of Bhopal, while this system continued, consists in the proceedings of the Dewans, or ministers.

Hyat Mahomed Khan, when installed Nabob, had no children by his wife, but he had adopted four Chelahs*, or family dependants, who were

* Chelah means literally an adopted dependant; it neither

considered almost as relations. The eldest of these, Fowlad Khan, was the son of a Gond. The second, Jumshere Khan, was the son of a Gossein; and the third and fourth, Chutta Khan and Islam Khan, were the sons of a Brahmin. The merit of having withdrawn these children from their errors to the true faith, no doubt, constituted, in the mind of a pious Mahomedan prince, another tie to strengthen that of adoption.

Fowlad Khan, the eldest of the Chelats, was the first who possessed the power of minister: and it was during his administration that the detach-
A.D.1778. ment, under General Goddard passed through the territories of Bhopal. The inhabitants of that country are justly proud of the part their prince took upon this occasion: and with reason, for it was bold and decided in a degree beyond what their condition warranted. Every aid required was freely given by this petty state; and, from the certificates still preserved by some of the heads of villages, it would seem that all ranks behaved in the most friendly manner to a body of men who prized such conduct more from having elsewhere met with nothing but hostility. That the remaining part of the march of the Bengal detachment, after it passed the Nerbudda, was unobstructed, may in some degree be ascribed to

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applies to a slave, nor an adopted child, but to a person who is admitted to the claims of a dependant relation.

the line taken by the Pataus of Bhopal, whose conduct on this memorable occasion established a claim upon the British government, that merited all the notice which it has since received. In an official * abstract made from the correspondence of General Goddard, it is stated that every effort was made to render the Nabob of Bhopal hostile to the English, but in vain. He remained true to his first promise of friendship, though many of his fields and villages were, in consequence of his fidelity to his engagement, plundered by the Mahrattas.

Soon after these events a family quarrel occurred, in which Fowlad Khan was slain, in an attempt to capture the old fort of Bhopal, then the residence of the widow of Yar Mahomed Khan: who, from disgust at his violent and tyrannical acts, had for some time resolved to subvert his authority, and to raise to power Chutta Khan, who she had taken care should be well instructed, that he might be competent to the duties of the high station.

The history of this extraordinary princess, who lived to the advanced age of eighty, and who for more than half a century greatly influenced, if she did not controul, the councils of Bhopal, is very extraordinary. Her name was Mumullah: she

* I obtained this abstract of the proceedings of the Bengal detachment at Bombay. There are no records of the progress of this corps in the political office at Calcutta.

came from Upper Hindustan, but seems to have been of too obscure an origin to leave any exact record of her parents or place of birth. Though never publicly married * to the Nabob Yar Mahomed, she became the principal lady of his family. She had herself no children, but all those of Yar Mahomed she considered as her own, and the title of Mahjee Sahibah, or lady mother, which was given her by them and all others, proves the respect in which she was held. From the account given of her conduct, under the most trying circumstances, it seems difficult to pronounce whether she was most remarkable for the humanity of her disposition, or the excellence of her judgment. She was beloved and respected by all. Her memory is still cherished by the natives, both Hindu and Mahomedan, of Bhopal; and it is consoling to see, in the example of her life, that, even amid scenes of violence and crime, goodness and virtue, when combined with spirit and sense, maintain that superiority which belongs alone to the higher qualities of our nature, and which without these can be permanently conferred by neither title nor station.

This virtuous woman had every reason to congratulate herself on her choice of Chutta Khan;

* The Nikah was performed on her union with the Nabob. This engagement, though inferior to marriage, is still respectable. It is common where the condition of the parties is too unequal to admit of one more legitimate.

who proved, throughout his life, the friend of the poor, and the promoter of order and tranquillity; but the determined resolution with which he pursued these objects, brought him in violent collision with several of the principal nobles of the state, some of whom were his enemies from the first, being indignant at the elevation of one they deemed so much their inferior. Two brothers, Kumal Mahomed and Sheriff Mahomed, who were nearly related to the Nabob, on the failure of a plot to possess themselves of Gunnour, retired with about seven hundred followers towards Sehore. Chutta Khan pursued them, and, in an engagement which took place, Sheriff Mahomed was slain. Kumal Mahomed effected his escape, though wounded, with the son of his brother. The latter, Vizier Mahomed, then a youth, lived to preserve his country, and to become the founder of the present family of Bhopal.

To this event succeeded others* of a similar

* Among the conspiracies formed against the power of Chutta Khan, one of the most remarkable was that of Nijabut Mahomed Khan, a turbulent Patan chief, the son of Yassein Mahomed Khan, whose object was to murder the nabob and ministers. This tragedy was to be acted on the last day of the Ramzan, when all the Afghans of the nabob's family were assembled at the house of the Mahjee, or lady mother, to pay their respects to that princess. Some suspicion was attached to Nijabut, and he had been desired to leave his arms; he apparently did so, but a breeze of wind which blew aside his upper garments revealed a concealed dagger. The alarm of

chief, which greatly irritated the mind of Chutta Khan, and urged him to very severe, if not [illegible] measures. This change of conduct was generally attributed to the death of the [illegible] by whom he had been raised to the [illegible] of minister. He had certainly acted with great prudence and moderation while she lived, from respect to her advice, and confidence in her support; but when left alone, he saw his safety in another course. Enraged by the frequent conspiracies of the nobles against his power, he put [illegible] some, and expelled others. He removed [illegible] from all offices of trust, which were filled [illegible] by persons on whose attachment he could rely. He established such a police within the [illegible] of Bhopal, as completely suppressed the [illegible] affrays to which the Patans are so prone, and their turbulent spirit was for the moment subdued. By these means Chutta Khan not only maintained external quiet, but promoted, beyond all [illegible] before him, the prosperity of the territory of Bhopal. His next object was to [illegible] peace with his neighbours,

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treason was given [illegible]dir, and the fierce chief, finding he was discovered, [illegible] the nabob, but was overpowered and slain, not [illegible] struggle, as he is represented to have been a man of [illegible] strength and desperate courage. Three of the principal conspirators were killed at the same time, but not before [illegible] down Raja Bholanath, one of the principal Hindu officers of the government.

but particularly with Madhajee Sindia and Alia Bhye, who at this period were the chief rulers in Central India. His principles of moderation were sometimes carried to an extent that astonished many. Of this, the following instance may be given. A few years before his death, the Pindarry leader, Hera Bhye, plundered and burned some villages of Bhopal. Chutta Khan sent troops in pursuit of the depredators; and they returned with four hundred naked prisoners, who had been stripped of their horses and clothes. When these expected to be put to death, they were surprised to hear Chutta Khan direct that they should be released, and that each man should have a turban and a rupee to carry him back to his home. "Take this," he exclaimed, "but re-"collect you shall have other treatment if you "come again into my country." When those around him looked surprised, he said, "These "poor creatures are, of themselves, no objects of "vengeance; their leaders, from their connexion "with the Mahratta chiefs, are above my power; "why outrage by useless violence those whose em-"ployers we cannot punish? They will now feel "obliged by my humanity to their followers, who "were in my power; and it will be an additional "motive to make them refrain from attacking us.*"

* This occurrence and Chutta Khan's speech were stated by Khealee Ram, then a writer in his office, who witnessed and heard what he narrates.

Nor was he mistaken: during his life there were no more inroads made by these freebooters on the territory of Bhopal.

Chutta Khan was not above forty years of age when he died. Though he had been brought up a Mahomedan, he appears to have continued as much a Hindu in his disposition as he was in his appearance. He was of a moderate stature, slight make, temperate in his language, and smooth in his manners: he combined art with resolution, and was, in short, in every thing the opposite of that tribe to which he belonged by adoption.

On the death of Chutta Khan efforts were made by several persons to obtain possession of his wealth. Nawaub Khan, a Patan officer, who had long been in his service, tried to make himself master both of his treasure and the government; but after some acts of great violence, he was forced to leave Bhopal, carrying with him property to the supposed amount of six lacks of rupees. He left the unprotected family of his late master to the oppression of their enemies.

Ghous Mahomed Khan, son of Hyat Mahomed, stimulated by the exaggerated reports of the wealth left by Chutta Khan, exercised every species of torture to exact it from the mother of his two illegitimate sons, who was the daughter of a tradesman. This unfortunate woman, after being plundered of every thing, was glad to escape alive. She is now at Seronge, dependant for daily

food on the Nabob Ameer Khan. Her only son, Ameer Mahomed*, is among the poorest of the followers of Ghuffoor Khan at Indore. Such has been the fate of the family of a man who by his management raised Bhopal to the highest state of prosperity. But these reverses of fortune are too common in India to excite attention, much less commiseration.

Himut Row, a native of Upper Hindustan, who had been during almost the whole of Chutta Khan's administration at the head of the revenue department, now received the title of Raja, and was created Dewan, or minister; but during the twelvemonth he held this office, he had hardly any power. Every thing was done by the Bebee (so Hyat Mahomed Khan's favourite lady was called), and an eunuch of the name of Gul Khojah, in whom she confided; and among other ruinous expedients to which these persons had recourse to avert the dangers that threatened Bhopal, amidst the confusion which at this period prevailed in Central India, Luckma Dada, one of Sindia's independent leaders, was called upon as an auxiliary, and promised high pay and reward if he would recover the fort of Hussingabad, which had, immediately after the death of Chutta

* From the several opportunities that have been afforded this man of improving his condition in life, and the bad use he has made of them, I am disposed to believe he is a worthless character.

Khan, been attacked and taken by Ragojee Bhonslah, whose armies, aided by large bodies of Pindarries, had begun to lay waste the territories of Bhopal.

While these events threatened the destruction of this petty state, a youth made his appearance as its defender, in a manner which gives to his history an air of romance which continued to its close. He came to the gate of the city, habited as a soldier of fortune, and attended by some well-mounted adherents, and on being stopped by the guards, proclaimed himself to be Vizier Mahomed, the son of Sheriff Mahomed Khan, the cousin of the reigning Nabob, with whom he desired an interview. This was immediately granted. The Nabob, after the first salutation, asked him how he had subsisted during his absence from Bhopal. He frankly avowed, that, having been banished his native country by the power of Chutta Khan, against whose administration his father had rebelled, he had been compelled to earn a livelihood by serving Huttee Singh, a plundering Rajpoot chief in the province of Omutwarrah. He had learnt, he said, the profession of a soldier; and the reports which he heard of the distress and danger of the land of his ancestors, had made him determine, at all hazards, to offer his services and to give his life (it was all he had), in any way the Nabob pleased, for his country. The old prince was roused from his usual state of abstraction

by the occurrence. He gave to Vizier Mahomed the endearing title of son, and hailed him (with a spirit of prophecy) as the future saviour of the state. The period was one of action. The troops A. D. 1799. of Nagpoor were besieging Hussingabad, and the depredations of the Pindarries were every day more dreadful. We may imagine how rapidly the fame of Vizier Mahomed, who at once became a distinguished actor in these scenes, increased, when we are told that, in eight months after he reached Bhopal, he was a popular candidate for the office of Dewan. The Nabob is said to have determined on his elevation; but it was opposed by his son Ghous Mahomed, and the mother of that prince, who represented the danger of giving such a station to a person whose mind was still warm with the wrongs of his family, and who had a father's death to revenge. It was acknowledged, however, that a Patan of high rank was necessary to the conduct of affairs, and the choice unfortunately fell on Mooreed Mahomed Khan, the descendant of Sultan Mahomed Khan, and hereditary lord of Rhatgur. This chief refused to accept the office, till the Mahratta auxiliaries were dismissed. A large sum was given them in consequence of their agreeing to depart; and the new Dewan came, accompanied by a thousand adherents, to take charge of the government. Mooreed Mahomed Khan presented, in his appearance and character, a very remark-

able contrast to Vizier Mahomed. He had more the look and manners of a Hindu merchant than an Afghan chief. On the first day of his arrival he encamped at the garden of his grandfather, Sultan Mahomed Khan, where the day was passed in a display of tender feeling. He wept aloud at the recollections of the misfortunes of his family which this spot brought to his mind, and embraced the trees which had been planted by his dear ancestors.* Next day, when he was introduced to the old Nabob, he addressed him in the most humble and fulsome language, calling him his more than father; he lavished at the same time the most exaggerated praise on Ghous Mahomed. The Bebee, or mother of that prince, at whose court he next attended, was termed his aunt, and the person towards whom he looked for advancement. A still more extraordinary part was acted when the chief bankers and merchants of the city waited upon him. He refused their usual offerings of money, and made them presents of clothes, and honoured some of the principal with the title of relations.† All the citizens he met were conciliated by the most soothing language; and, to gratify the poorer classes, he directed con-

* Persian Manuscript.

† Derum Chund and Kool Chund, were both styled cousins by this cajoling minister. The whole of the proceedings of this period are taken from authentic manuscripts, and from the statements of actors in the scenes described.

siderable sums to be distributed in charity. Many of the inhabitants of Bhopal were delighted by a demeanour to which they had been so little accustomed; but the haughty and turbulent Afghan lords of that capital could hardly repress their indignation at a conduct which they considered derogatory and disgraceful. Some, better acquainted with the individual by whom these arts were practised, waited anxiously till the veil should be withdrawn, and his real character developed. They were not long in suspense: for in less than a month the vindictive and avaricious spirit which Mooreed Mahomed Khan evinced, in the oppression of the aged widow of Raja Byjeeram, opened the eyes of all. His conduct on this occasion was more despicable, from the distressed condition the poor woman had been before reduced to. His next attack was on the late Dewan, Raja Himut Row, whom with his nephew, Khealee Ram*, the manager of Bersiah, he confined for six weeks, till they paid a fine of ten thousand rupees. The supplies extorted from such sources of petty oppression were insufficient either to satisfy the Dewan's avarice, or the wants of the state, which latter every day became more pressing, from the general confusion that prevailed throughout the whole of Central India.

* This person has been in my service for the last two years. He is a man of very clear intellect, and has a complete knowledge of the affairs of Bhopal at this period.

The Bhopal possessions, in common with others, were now overrun with freebooters and robbers of every description, and the troops it was necessary to maintain for their defence were clamorous for their pay. To relieve these wants, Mooreed Mahomed Khan imposed a tax on each house in Bhopal, which was levied according to the real or supposed wealth of the inhabitants; and those he had a short time before conciliated by the most endearing epithets, were now treated with marked severity. Grown bold with success, the Dewan demanded money from the Bebee, and, irritated by her refusal, he determined on her destruction.* This lady had been raised from the lowest† class, and, though not married to Hyat Mahomed Khan, had enjoyed as his favourite mistress all the rank and power of the first princesses. She paid little attention to the Nabob, who, absorbed in religious contemplation‡, was heedless of her conduct. The character of Chutta Khan had kept her in

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* Mooreed Mahomed had persuaded the Nabob and Ghous Mahomed to forbid any person attending Durbar with their arms. This order induced Vizier Mahomed and other Patans to retire from court.

† She was the daughter of a poor musician.

‡ Different reasons have been assigned for this seclusion; but, whether his conduct was guided by religious contemplation, or arose from apathy or stupidity, the effect was the same—a complete disqualification for the management of the affairs of the principality.

restraint, but subsequent to his death she had been less prudent.

Mooreed Mahomed, after exciting the prejudices of the Patans against her, on the ground of her mean birth, and the intrigues she carried on, took the opportunity of a visit of ceremony to have her assassinated. Two of her principal officers were killed in her defence; and though she fled from the court where she was seated to the inner apartments, the partizans of Mooreed followed and dispatched her. To cloak his own conduct, and to avoid the odium of the massacre, the Dewan swore upon the Koran that he had put the Bebee to death at the earnest entreaty of her son, Ghous Mahomed, who insisted on the execution as a punishment for the dishonour her licentiousness had brought on him and his family. Whether Ghous Mahomed, or his father, really assented to this proceeding, could never be known, as they were both too much at the mercy of Mooreed Mahomed, to venture any expression of their feelings. But the secret motives of the minister's conduct were soon revealed, by the plunder of all the property this lady had amassed*, a great part of which he is believed to have conveyed to Rhatghur and other places, where, amid the rapid

* The unpopularity into which this woman had fallen from her cruel usage of the family of Chutta Khan prevented her being pitied: but this fact was by none deemed a palliation of the atrocity committed by Mooreed Mahomed Khan.

revolutions that ensued, it became lost to him and to the state.

The next person whom Mooreed Mahomed Khan marked for destruction was Vizier Mahomed, whose reputation excited both his jealousy and alarm; but all his attempts against this young chief were unsuccessful. They added to the fame of the man he hated and dreaded. Vizier Mahomed, when sent with inadequate means to oppose the Pindarries, supplied by his personal valour and judgment the want of numbers, and obtained the admiration even of his enemies*. His penetration soon developed the artifices of the Dewan, and he was cautioned not to trust himself in his power. A plan was laid by Mooreed Mahomed to cut him off near Chynpoor Barree; but the letter which contained the instructions was intercepted, and the governor† of that place, to whom it was addressed, was defeated, and fled wounded, with the loss of guns and baggage, into his fort, which next day surrendered to Vizier Mahomed. The

* Vizier Mahomed, when in the service of Huttee Singh of Omutwarrah, had, on a plundering expedition, the tail of his horse cut completely off. But he knew his value too well to reject him on this account, and the fame of the horse, well known by this mark, and that of his rider, were associated. It is asserted that the cry of *Bunda Ghora ka Sowar*, or the cavalier with the cut-tail horse, was certain to put the Pindarries to flight, whatever were their numbers.

† His name was Rahim Khan.

news of this event was received by the timid Dewan as the prelude to his downfal, and, regardless of every thing but personal considerations, he summoned to his aid a large body of Mahrattas under Balaram Inglia (one of Dowlet Row Sindia's predatory leaders, who was then subsisting his force by pillage), and the standard of Sindia was, on the arrival of this force, displayed over the ramparts of Futtyghur, and the citadel of Bhopal. The next concession the minister desired to make to his new allies, was the fort of Islamnuggur; but what his fears had granted was saved by the spirit of an Afghan widow lady, named Motee Bebee *, who, when the Mahrattas were advancing, ordered the gates to be shut and the guns to be opened, saying she knew not by what authority Mooreed Mahomed Khan disposed of the Bhopal fortresses, and that she would not permit any strangers to intrude where she dwelt. The noble resolution of this high-minded female appears to have been well supported by the troops of the garrison; and the Mahrattas were forced to retire.

Vizier Mahomed, who had been employed in establishing his authority over the country round Chynpoor Barree, moved, the moment he heard of this occurrence, upon Bhopal. This led the Dewan and his Mahratta ally to march out of Futtyghur to

* Aunt to Vizier Mahomed.

a plain four miles distant, where they were reinforced by some infantry and guns, and a body of troops under Bappoo Sindia.

The fort of Futtyghur was on this occasion left to the care of the since celebrated Ameer Khan, to whom the custody of Ghous Mahomed was also assigned.

Vizier Mahomed had several sharp skirmishes with the Mahrattas, in which his courage and talent gained him the advantage; but the numbers of his enemies would perhaps have ultimately prevailed, if the troubles * which commenced in Sindia's own possessions had not made him direct his leaders to withdraw from all interference with the affairs of Bhopal. These orders were immediately obeyed, but Balaram carried with him the Dewan Mooreed Mahomed Khan as far as Seronge. He now accused that chief of being the author of all his disappointments, and of being concerned in the resistance which had been made to his occupation of the fort of Islamnuggur. The other in vain denied the charge, and stated how irreconcileable such conduct was with his own interests; his notorious reputation as a deceiver was brought forward by the Mahratta leader in answer to all he could urge in his defence. He was threatened with torture, unless he immediately gave up the treasures he was

* The contest between Sindia and the widows of his uncle and predecessor commenced at this period.

known to possess, and his fears and confinement brought on a violent illness; but even this was treated as a trick, and when he died, Balaram refused for two days to allow his body to be buried, declaring his conviction that he had counterfeited death to effect his escape; nor was it till putrefaction had commenced that the Mahratta chief would resign his prey and believe that for once Mooreed Mahomed Khan did not practise deceit! The name of this man is doomed to execration by his tribe, and to this day when a Patan of Bhopal visits Seronge to pay his devotion at a shrine sacred to Murtiza Ali*, it is deemed an essential part of the pilgrimage to bestow five blows with a slipper on the tomb of Mooreed Mahomed Khan, to mark at once the contempt and indignation which his memory excites.

After the retreat of the Mahrattas, Vizier Mahomed surrounded the fort of Futtyghur, of which Ameer Khan still retained possession. The latter, however, soon agreed to give up Ghous Mahomed, and to evacuate the place. He afterwards entered into the service of Bhopal, but was found so intriguing a character, that at the end of six months he was discharged, and proceeded, as has been before stated, to share the fortunes of Jeswunt Row Holkar.

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* This is the title by which the Caliph Ali, the nephew and son-in-law of the prophet Mahomed, is designated.

The mode in which the revenues of Bhopal were collected, has been already noticed. The Dewan, which office Vizier Mahomed now filled, received all the collections, except those appropriated for the personal support of the Nabob; but this revenue, from the distracted state of Malwa, and the incessant incursions of the Mahrattas and Pindarries, was, at the present period, not above fifty thousand rupees, out of which an army was to be maintained that could not be reduced below four thousand men without endangering even the nominal sovereignty of a country, which it was always hoped might yet enjoy peace and prosperity. Under such circumstances Vizier Mahomed cannot be censured for having, to preserve the existence of the state he governed, had recourse to the same irregular practices, to which all others, from Dowlet Row Sindia down to the pettiest chief in Central India, then resorted; or, in other words, to endeavour to make his army support itself. This system of indiscriminate violence, which appears on the first view to confound all rights and property, and to attain its ends by any expedient, was, nevertheless, not without its distinctions; certain principles being recognized, and, generally speaking, well observed by all parties.

The Bheels, and other tribes of petty robbers, plundered wherever, and whatever they could. The chiefs of the Pindarries often contracted obligations with the principal sovereigns of the coun-

try, which limited their depredations; and though these freebooters had never established any character for good faith or honour, they had a knowledge of their own interest, which constituted some check on their proceedings. The Grassiah or Rajpoot chiefs, who, deprived of their lands by the Mahrattas, still claimed a share of their revenues on the ground of their ability to injure them, were satisfied with a fixed and known Tanka, or tribute from certain territories, on which they had a real or pretended claim; and their irruptions were directed to enforce this payment. The latter class of freebooters were always natives of the soil, and generally the friends, often the relations, of the Zemindars, or landholders. Their war was with the government, and not with the inhabitants. The next and highest description of plunderers were the existing governments. The armies and detachments of Dowlet Row Sindia, Holkar, and other Mahrattas, wherever they marched, levied as heavy a contribution* as could be extorted from the managing officers of the province or town they entered or attacked. At this period the greatest part of the revenues of Central India were collected in the manner described. The Campoos, or

* The districts of Raisseen, Ashta, Sehore, Duraha, and Itchawur, were reconquered, and contributions were levied from Shujahalpoor, Bersiah, Bhilsa, on the North side of the Nerbudda, and from Seonee, and other districts South of that river.

brigades, of Sindia and Holkar traversed that unfortunate country, making little distinction to whom the place belonged from which they desired to obtain money. The leaders of these corps had always the ready excuse, if they desired it, of a mutiny among their troops for arrears of pay; and the prince whose name they usurped, avowed or disapproved their actions, as it suited his temporary interests.

Vizier Mahomed, not satisfied with the reconquest of the districts which had been taken from Bhopal, levied contributions on other states. He displayed equal gallantry and judgment in the various incursions he made into the neighbouring principalities, which he compelled to furnish a portion of revenue to supply his exhausted resources. But of all his exploits, there is none during this period of his life which reflects more credit on his character as a soldier than the recapture of Hussingabad, which he, in concert with the Pindarries, A.D. 1803. came upon so suddenly, and with such determined resolution, that he actually terrified its governor into a surrender.* After this exploit, Vizier Mahomed carried on for several years a petty warfare, marked by vicissitudes, with the

* This event occurred A. D. 1803, about a year after the reduction of Poissein, Hussingabad had capitulated to the Nagpoor Raja in 1799, and remained with him till thus recaptured.

Mahratta chiefs, who now considered him as a declared enemy. He in consequence endeavoured to strengthen himself by a connexion with the Pindarries. His first ally among these freebooters was Kurreem Khan, to whom he gave two villages in Bersiah. Cheetoo, another Pindarry chief, entered also into a compact of friendship with the Prince of Bhopal. He was promised a place of refuge for his family in one of its fastnesses, and received a grant of the village of Chippaneer on the Nerbudda. The Pindarry leader, in return, aided the state of Bhopal against the Raja of Nagpoor.

The relations between the petty state of Bhopal and the government of Sindia had latterly undergone a considerable change, of which it is here necessary to take a retrospect. Madhajee Sindia had been, throughout his life, looked upon as the friendly protector of the Afghan principality; and though no actual supremacy was either asserted or admitted, still there was, from the policy of both parties, an implied connexion. This led to considerable importance being attached to the Khelaut, or honorary dresses, which Dowlet Row Sindia sent to the Nabob, and to Vizier Mahomed Khan; but the latter, nevertheless, kept aloof when Sindia required him to accompany his army, then on its march to attack Jeswunt Row Holkar. The consequence of this caution was, that when the Pindarry leaders, Kur-

[illegible] Zinan, Dost Mahomed, and Cheetoo, were [illegible] with favours and created Nabobs (for the [illegible] ruler now conferred* this Mahomedan [illegible] in consideration of the aid they had given, the brother of Vizier Mahomed, whom he sent to congratulate that prince on his success, was received with such marked coolness, as left little doubt of the measures in contemplation.

Ghous Mahomed, the son of the nominal Nabob, continued to regard Vizier Mahomed, after his elevation to the office of Dewan, with envy and hatred, and in consequence entered into a league with the Pindarry chief Kurreem, to supplant his authority. Their first efforts were so far successful, as to compel Vizier Mahomed to retire from Bhopal; but he soon returned, and, drawing them from that capital, forced them to seek refuge in the camp of Dowlet Row Sindia, who was then engaged in the siege of a neighbouring fortress. Although that prince deemed this the proper period to execute a design he had long cherished, of seizing Kurreem†, yet it did not prevent his

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* The bestowing this title had no form but the chiefs Sindia or Holkar addressing the favoured person in writing, or verbally, as Nabob, on which the Chobdars and Durbar officers proclaim[illegible] title, and the party ever after assumed it, was a[illegible]ed on his seal.

† This event [illegible] wards proceeded to b[illegible] ted i[illegible] A. D. 1807.

listening to the complaints of Ghous Mahomed Khan; and so eager was this imbecile chief to ruin Vizier Mahomed, that he engaged to surrender the fort of Islamnuggur, pay four lacks of rupees in cash, and present an annual tribute of fifty thousand rupees to Sindia, with eleven thousand to his public officers. Having consented to these disgraceful terms, he proceeded to Bhopal, after being invested with an honorary dress by Dowlet Row Sindia, whose ostensible support he seems to have thought sufficient to maintain him in power; nor does he appear, on his return, to have met with any opposition on the part of Vizier Mahomed.

The fort of Islamnuggur was immediately surrendered to one of Sindia's officers; and eighteen days after that event, Hyat Mahomed died. He was seventy-three years of age, very corpulent, and of large stature. This weak and wretched prince appears to have been completely exhausted by the harassing scenes amid which he lived; and those near him relate that his invocations for death to release him, were frequent and earnest.

In the same year that Hyat Mahomed died, Hussingabad and Chynpoor Barree were taken by the armies of the Nagpoor Raja, one of whose generals, Sadick Ali, was invited by Ghous Mahomed to advance on Bhopal. Vizier Mahomed probably felt himself unable to prevent these ruinous measures, taken as they were by one who was the recognized prince of the country. He, in

consequence, after expressing his indignation at such disgraceful proceedings, retired to the fortress [illegible] part of his [illegible] Fuddick Ali, [illegible] Seeks, retired [illegible] to the son of [illegible] the agent [illegible] that prince [illegible]

Vizier [illegible] and, encou[illegible] reign among [illegible] empt to re[illegible] ad-herent[illegible] day reach[illegible] as-sault[illegible] cked and e[illegible] evacuate[illegible] Ma-homed[illegible] most conte[illegible] said, that [illegible] from he m[illegible] be imm[illegible] the "wi[illegible] em "for[illegible] ore,

† Lal Jee and Roop Chund were trodden to death by elephants. Nowbut Rae Buckshee (or paymaster), Bevee Lal Buckshee (secretary), and Sooruj Mul, were blown from guns.

were put to death. Besides these, two Brahmins were bound: and a cow being killed before them, their mouths were opened with wedges, and the blood poured down their throats; they were then liberated, and desired to go and describe the taste of cow's blood to Sindia and the Nagpoor Raja. No mode of vengeance could have been more cruel or insulting than that which Vizier Mahomed thus perpetrated. It was thought that he had outraged the feelings of the Mahratta princes, of whom the traitors he punished were but the instruments, beyond the hope of forgiveness; but he succeeded, for the moment, in appeasing the anger of Sindia, by promising faithfully to fulfil the terms into which Ghous Mahomed had entered, and by sending his eldest son as an hostage for the liquidation of such part of the four lacks of rupees as was still in arrear.

About a year after these transactions, Vizier Mahomed reconquered the territories of Bhopal North of the Nerbudda, which had been seized by Sadick Ali, whose brother, the governor of those districts, was slain. Some months afterwards, Ameer Khan solicited and obtained the assistance of Vizier Mahomed in a contest with the Raja of Nagpoor. They came upon the troops of that prince in a situation where they were strongly posted; but Ameer Khan, nevertheless, proposed an immediate attack. Vizier Mahomed, who was remarkable, notwithstanding his sense and courage, for his

superstitious prejudices *, said the day was unfortunate, and requested him to defer it. This, however, Ameer Khan refused to do, with an expressed contempt of the reason on which the [illegible] vice was grounded. [illegible]

[illegible]

* He always [illegible] back, in which [illegible] the calculations [illegible] faith in omens. [illegible] was real or pre[illegible] extraordinary vicissitudes of his [illegible] derived and imparted to his followers courage from the slightest events.

"shrunk from danger? Retreat, therefore, shall "never be resorted to by me, till I have convinced "my enemies that I am resolved to achieve what-"ever is within the verge of possibility*." This conference was quite public: Vizier Mahomed acted as he said he would; he immediately led his troops, who were animated by his brave resolution, and proud of the superiority of their chief, against the Nagpoor army, which he forced, in their turn, to give ground; but their numbers were too great, and he derived no benefit, except the substantial one of maintaining his high name by this temporary success. His attempts at this period to obtain the assistance and mediation of the British government †, were unsuccessful: for though there was no doubt, from the character of Vizier Mahomed, that it was with a view to self-preservation alone that he had contracted A.D. 1809. friendship with the Pindarry leaders and Ameer Khan, this could not prevent his being classed among those who had combined to overrun the territories of Nagpoor and the Deckan. He had, in fact, not only co-operated with these plunderers,

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* I took down this speech of Vizier Mahomed from the relation of a most intelligent native, who was present when it was made; and had it subsequently confirmed by others who heard it.

† Enyot Museeh was employed on this occasion to endeavour to interest Mr. Jenkins, the resident at the court of Nagpoor, in his favour.

but his country was their professed asylum. He was, in consequence, at this period in imminent hazard of being destroyed by the British forces, which advanced under Sir Barry Close across the Nerbudda. That army acted in co-operation with the Raja of Nagpoor against Ameer Khan; but the officer who commanded it had discretionary orders to attack Bhopal. The danger which threatened this petty state was averted by the jealousy of the court of Nagpoor, and by the open and ruinly conduct of Vizier Mahomed. While Sadick Ali was seizing Chyrapoor Barree and other possessions, Vizier Mahomed sent an agent to Colonel Close to describe the necessity under which he had acted, to urge the claims of the Bhopal family on the British nation, for the aid formerly given to General Goddard, and finally to state his complete acquiescence in whatever terms the Colonel might dictate. His agent was instructed to declare distinctly, that no thoughts of opposition were entertained against a nation which was regarded by the princes and nobles of Bhopal with a hereditary feeling of hope and confidence, and towards which no extreme of distress could ever make them place themselves in the relation of enemies.

The conduct of Vizier Mahomed and his officers, when the British troops were within and near his territories, corresponded with his professions. But he chiefly owed his safety to the

vacillating policy of Ragojee Bhoosla, on whose friendship the British government had every day less cause to rely. He saw and took advantage of this state of affairs: he eagerly pressed the claim of Bhopal to British protection; but an apprehension that interference in its concerns would involve much embarrassment, and carry government beyond the limit they wished, led to the rejection of all the propositions which he then made, and often repeated during the seven successive years of his arduous and unsupported struggles to maintain the existence of the state of which he was the head. This gallant chief was at once an object of terror and of calumny at the Mahratta courts, particularly at those of Nagpoor and Gualior. Their efforts to destroy him had driven him to have recourse to every means for the preservation of himself and his country; but, forgetting that they were the real authors of the condition in which he was placed, they represented him as the willing associate of Pindarries, the patron of plunderers, and the chief enemy to the restoration of peace in Central India. Viewed in this light, a combination of various states was formed against him, which, from the strength collected, seemed to render his escape from destruction almost impossible. But this part of the subject deserves minute notice, as it evinces in a remarkable manner what the natives of India are capable of effecting, when commanded by an

able leader who possesses their confidence and attachment.

In March 1812, one of Dowlet Row Sindia's principal generals, Juggoo Bappoo, made an attack on Bhopal, with the troops of which he had several slight actions, but appears to have made no impression. The pretence for this attack was the non-payment of sums due by Vizier Mahomed to the government of Sindia. On a small amount being given, and a promise of more, Juggoo Bappoo retired during the monsoon to a neighbouring district. When the season opened, this officer again advanced; and the approach of the Nagpoor troops under Sadick Ali, announced the commencement of that combined plan of operations, which Sindia and the Raja of Nagpoor had for some time contemplated against Bhopal. Their object was its annihilation, and an engagement was entered into by which the parties agreed to share equally its territory, the complete conquest of which they anticipated as the certain result of their great preparations.

The city of Bhopal, which stands on the high land of Gondwarra North of the Nerbudda, is of considerable extent, and about four miles in circumference. It is surrounded by a tolerable wall, but without any ditch, or other defence, on three faces. On the other, or Southern face, is the citadel of Futtyghur, which stands on an eminence, and is defended on one side by the tank or lake of Bhopal, a

noble sheet of water, which extends in length five miles, and is in average breadth about one. Most of the irregular crags or heights upon the bank of the lake had formerly been fortified; but all these works were at this period in a very bad condition, and their appearance, with that of the empty houses, (for Vizier Mahomed had warned all the inhabitants that could not share in the toils and dangers of the siege, to depart,) made Bhopal look more like a desolated ruin than the capital of a country. The events which ensued will be best given in a plain narrative* written by a respectable person who witnessed the actions he has described.

"Vizier Mahomed had within the walls of Bhopal nearly six thousand horse and foot in his own pay, three thousand Pindarries under Nanndar Khan, nephew of Kurreem, and two thousand men furnished by the Zemindars of the Tal Pergunnah, and by Ruttun Singh, Thakoor or Lord of Satunbaree. A.D. 1813.

"When Juggoo Bappoo†, after the rainy season was over, invested Bhopal, he was joined by one of his officers named Dan Singh, who reinforced him

* The name of the respectable Mahomedan who furnished me with this account was Ameer-Khan. He had been a soldier, and had become a merchant. His account was compared and corrected by that of several others, and no fact has been stated that has not been authenticated.

† His proper name was Jugapoh Bappoo, but he is best known in Indian history by the name of Juggoo Bappoo.

with twelve battalions of infantry and thirty guns, and this force, already amounting to twenty-five thousand, was subsequently augmented by the corps of Ram Lal* and Krishna Bhow, consisting of fifteen thousand men, horse and foot, and an army from Nagpoor under Sadick Ali of nearly thirty thousand men.

"When this great force, amounting altogether to seventy thousand men†, was assembled, the siege commenced. During the first fortnight there was only a cannonading, after which the regular infantry commanded by Dan Singh, assaulting Vizier Mahomed's out-posts, drove them with much loss on both sides under the shelter of the town‡, which the besiegers began to batter—having occupied all the advanced positions from which the besieged had been driven. The latter, when confined within the walls, suffered some distress, particularly the Pindarries, who representing to Vizier Mahomed that they were unable to procure forage for their horses,

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* Ram Lal was commander of the horse, and Krishna Bhow of the infantry.

† This statement is, perhaps, exaggerated by ten or fifteen thousand men, but the force is acknowledged by all to have been very great.

‡ It is stated in Major Henley's notes on this siege, that the friends of Vizier Mahomed had on this occasion the utmost difficulty in prevailing on him to abandon the tombs of his ancestors, where the principal battery of the enemy was afterwards raised.

requested his permission to withdraw from the city. Vizier Mahomed consented, and the Pindarries withdrew by a by-road unknown to the enemy. Most of the mounted troops belonging to the Zemindars were compelled by the same necessity to follow this example. They promised, however, to assist as much as possible, by conveying grain to the town as opportunities should occur; they fulfilled their pledge, and the besieged received for a time occasional supplies by a secret road leading from the gates of the old fort of Bhopal, over hills and defiles. But a deserter from the town gave information to the enemy of this communication, and it was immediately stopped by Sadick Ali, who occupied a space reaching from the gate of the old fort to the Gunnour gate of the town wall. Juggoo Bappoo also took positions which commanded the approach to the principal gates of the town wall; and the three or four remaining ones were blocked up in the same manner by Ram Lal and Krishna Bhow. Whilst the enemy were employed in preventing the ingress or egress to or from the town, Vizier Mahomed made his dispositions for defence, by posting a certain number of men inside of each gate *. He gave a strict order to his troops that they should not expend

* The old fort was guarded by a Rajpoot officer, named Dongur Singh, with one hundred men. The Gunnour gate by

ammunition by firing unnecessarily, which could only tend to impress the enemy with an opinion of their unsteadiness; and was so rigid in enforcing its observance, that after the occurrence of several false alarms from unnecessary firing, he punished the offenders by cutting off their ears and noses, and expelling them with disgrace from the town. The siege commenced about
A.D. 1813. the latter end of October. In November the regular infantry of Juggoo Bappoo drove in

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Thakoor Jey Singh, with two hundred. The Gondwarra gate by a Seid named Meer Bakur Ali, with two hundred. The Mungulwarra by another Seid named Nunga Sir, (Bare head,) from continually going with his head uncovered, who had two hundred men under him. The Kowarra gate by Moolaeem Khan, with two hundred men. The Jumarath gate by a Chelah named Khaja Buksh, with two hundred. The Sondwarra gate by Moiz-Mahomed Khan, son of Ghous Mahomed, with four hundred men; and the Hummamei gate by Kurreem Mahomed Khan, with two hundred. In a suburb called Vizier Gunge, founded by Vizier Mahomed outside of the town, an officer named Goolshun Row was posted with five hundred men. Futtyghur was defended by an officer named Dil Mahomed Khan, with two hundred men. A fortified eminence within Futtyghur called the Bala Killa, or upper fort, was guarded by a Rajpoot named Zalim Singh, with one hundred men. The sally-port of Futtyghur was defended by Soota Khan, a Chelah, with one hundred men. Vizier Mahomed did not restrict himself to any particular place, but with five hundred men under his immediate personal command, had a general superintendence over all the posts, to any of which he was ready to move as occasion required.

the Bhopal outposts, as before-mentioned; and in the beginning of December the enemy took up the positions that have been detailed, to blockade the town gates. Shortly after this, Vizier Mahomed was informed of a spot where treasure was supposed to be concealed. He ordered the ground to be dug, and found twenty-two large bags, or sacks, containing each eight or ten thousand pieces of copper. He also found thirty small iron guns, in good condition: these he directed to be mounted on the walls, while the copper was coined, and distributed to the troops. Grain had now become so scarce, that only two seers* were procurable for a rupee. As it has been stated that every road to the town was blocked up by the enemy, it is necessary to recollect, in order to account for the besieged continuing to receive occasional supplies, that the town of Bhopal is defended by a large lake on the western side, over which grain was from time to time transported in boats, for the use of the besieged, by some of the principal Zemindars, or landholders, of the country, and particularly by Ruttun Singh. The progress of the besiegers was slow during the first two months. The wall of the town of Bhopal is high and strong, and the artillery of the enemy seldom fired more than forty shots in

* A seer is eighty rupees in weight; and, according to the Oojein rupee, this may be estimated about two pounds averdupois.

a day, except on occasions of their making an attack. None had yet been made upon the body of the town; but about the middle of December a general assault took place. A storming party was directed upon every gate, whilst others attempted to escalade the walls; but they were repulsed at every point, though not till after a conflict which lasted eighteen hours. The conduct of Vizier Mahomed on this occasion gave great courage and confidence to the troops and the inhabitants. He flew himself, or sent succour, to every point that was pressed, till attack after attack was abandoned in despair by the assailants.

A. D. 1814. "In the month of January two different assaults on the town were made at the same time—one by Sadick Ali on the Gunnour gate, and the other by Dan Singh on the Mungulwarra gate. Some of the assailants were so successful as to effect an entrance by escalade over a part of the wall that had been battered near the top; but they met with so warm a reception from the defenders within, that the whole of them were forced to retreat. The partial success of the attack on the Mungulwarra gate having attracted the attention of the besieged, who all crowded to that quarter, the defence of the Gunnour gate was neglected; and a party were enabled to escalade the wall and gain a bastion, where they planted their standard. This display, however, afforded but a short-lived

triumph; as the women of this quarter of the town, alarmed at the danger that threatened them, assembled in crowds on the tops of houses and other high places, and attacked the enemy with a shower of tiles, stones, and other missiles. The unexpected annoyance from these Amazons galled the assailants so severely, that they were compelled to lower their standard, and could hardly maintain their ground. At this juncture Vizier Mahomed, having repulsed the attack at the Mungulwarra gate, arrived to oppose that at the Gunnour gate, where he was equally successful, forcing those who had entered to retire precipitately and with great loss.* He was quite delighted with the conduct of the women who had defended this unguarded post, and, after highly applauding their courage, he rewarded them with presents for the essential service which they had performed. No event that occurred gave Vizier Mahomed such satisfaction as this. He was of a very sanguine temper, and inclined to superstition: and he drew a happy presage, from the display of valour made by the females of the town upon this occasion, that the place was not destined to fall into the hands of the besiegers. The situation, however, of the de-

* Another account states that the scaling-ladders were thrown down, which left the assailants without retreat, and the greater part of them were destroyed.

fenders of Bhopal became every day worse: during the month of February the price of the coarsest grain rose to the rate of a rupee per seer.* The boats had hitherto continued to bring occasional, though scanty supplies; but this mode of relief was discovered by the enemy, who bribed the boatmen to desert. This misfortune reduced the besieged to such distress, that numbers of the inhabitants, as well as the troops, were unable to resist opportunities which occurred of withdrawing; which, with casualties, diminished the number of the garrison from six thousand to as many hundreds. The Mahomedan part of this body did not scruple to eat carrion; while the most rigid of the Hindus endeavoured to appease the cravings of hunger by making food of bruised tamarind-stones and the leaves of trees. They, however, at times received assistance from the besiegers themselves, some of whom, tempted by exorbitant profit, furnished by stealth supplies of grain, which were handed over the walls. During this month some more efforts were made by Dan Singh, but with such unvaried bad success, that it excited the indignation of another commander, named Ram Lal, who resolved to make a desperate attack, boasting that he would in the course of next day be in possession of the town. In furtherance of this determination, he

* A seer, as has been explained, is two pounds weight. The usual price of the best grain is twenty seers the rupee.

prepared an assaulting party of three thousand chosen men, with which he marched before day-break upon Vizier Gunge. The troops stationed at this point were fortunately on the alert, and opened a smart fire, which gave the alarm to the besieged in the town: the latter immediately sent out two guns to their support, which, with those from the walls and from Futtyghur, were so well served, and did such execution by a cross fire amongst the enemy, that when day broke nearly a thousand of them were killed and wounded. The assailants, notwithstanding this loss, pushed boldly on till they advanced so close to the walls of Bhopal as to be under cover from the cannon. At this crisis Vizier Mahomed with only fifty men made a sally from the Junarath gate, and the party at Vizier Gunge sallying from thence at the same time, they made conjointly an attack upon the enemy with such desperate resolution and ardour, that they forced them to retreat, with their numbers reduced from three thousand to little more than five hundred. Vizier Mahomed lost on this occasion sixty or seventy of his best men, which, with other casualties, lessened his adherents to the small number of two hundred. But Ram Lal, one of the bravest of the leaders of his enemies, was so much dispirited and afflicted by the defeat he had sustained, and the loss of so many men, that he would never venture upon another assault.

Grain was not now procurable in Bhopal, except such as was sold clandestinely by the besiegers; even that was little, and at the enhanced rate of two rupees per seer, whilst it continued to be sold in the Mahratta camp at the rate of one rupee for five seers. To preserve life, the besieged had no other food than what has been before mentioned, pounded tamarind-stones and Casnee*; and even these two articles were not to be had under the exorbitant price of a rupee and a half per seer.

In the month of March the besieged experienced some respite from hostilities on the part of the enemy, in consequence of the death of Juggoo Bappoo, an event which occupied the Mahrattas nearly a month. The performance of the funeral obsequies and rites of this chief, appears to have been deemed a duty that superseded every other. About the end of the month of April one of Vizier Mahomed's officers, named Doongur Singh, who had been stationed with a party of one hundred men (now reduced to ten) to defend the old fort, allowed himself to be tampered with by Sadick Ali Khan; and he not only deserted his post during the night, but conducted about five hundred of the enemy into the fort he had aban-

* Casnee,—Cichorium Intybus, or Succory. It was probably the root of this plant that was used as food.

doned. It chanced that two men stationed at the old fort gate leading to the town, were alarmed at the hustle made by the Nagpoor troops as they entered. They imagined at first that it was created by Doongur Singh returning from his rounds: but upon attentively listening, they became convinced that the noise was that of a larger party than he had under his command. In order to ascertain the fact, they cautiously entered the fort, and on arriving near the Mausoleum of the late nabob Fyze Mahomed Khan, they found it filled by a body of the enemy, with the matches* of their fire-arms lighted. On this discovery, one of the men hastened to report the circumstance to Vizier Mahomed, who enquired what had become of Doongur Singh: the other replied that he could not tell, but advised that some prompt and decisive steps should be taken, otherwise the enemy would soon possess the town. On this remark, Vizier Mahomed, who had at that time only thirty men with him, cast an anxious glance at his son Nuzzer Mahomed Khan, who, construing the expression of his father's eye into a wish that he should be the first to go against the enemy, entreated permission to do so. 'If matters are come to this crisis,' said Vizier Mahomed, 'we must all go.' But, on farther solicitation from his son, he permitted him to proceed

* The irregular infantry of Native princes in India use matchlocks.

[illegible] active men, whilst he himself [illegible] under of his party followed at a short [illegible]

In the mean time the enemy had not quitted the Mausoleum, but, conceiving themselves already masters of Bhopal, had become neglectful of precaution: many of them had laid their matchlocks aside, whilst others undressing themselves sat down at their ease, enjoying the thoughts of their fancied success. On Nuzzer [illegible] arriving near the Mausoleum, two of the Patans who were a few paces in advance [illegible] called out, with a view of deceiving the enemy, to those in the rear, "Come on, [illegible] the enemy are very inferior to us "in numbers." A volley was instantly fired by this small party, which did great execution, as the fire-arms of the Patans consisted of a species of blunderbuss, each of which was loaded with thirty or forty small balls. The enemy were thrown into the greatest disorder and consternation by this unexpected attack. They were also deceived by the call purposely made by the foremost Patans, and in this state of perplexity were incapable of adopting any plan of defence. Vizier Mahomed with his party joined that of his son, and the whole of this little band of Patans threw aside their fire-arms, and, drawing their swords, rushed with impetuosity into the Mausoleum. Those of the enemy who could escape offered little or no resistance, but

they left behind them above a hundred men killed and wounded, and a number of their arms and clothes. Vizier Mahomed Khan was on this occasion most severely bruised with stones; and Nuzzer Mahomed Khan received a deep sabre cut on the shoulder, and a slight one on the head. This success was attended with more important consequences than could have been anticipated. In a few days after it occurred (in the beginning of May) Sadick Ali Khan announced his having had a dream, in which he heard a voice uttering awful maledictions against him for his apostacy, in leaguing with infidels against the followers of the most high Prophet. He had been warned, he added, to desist from attempts which were alike futile and impious, for it was evident the besieged were under the immediate protection of a divine Providence. The impression, real or pretended, made on Sadick Ali by this dream, was so great, that he publicly declared his resolution of conforming to what it dictated, and in consequence issued orders to his army to prepare to withdraw from Bhopal. Dan Singh and others of Sindia's commanders used many arguments to induce him to remain; but their entreaties were answered by exhortation to follow his example, if they wished to avoid the vengeance of Heaven.

"After the departure of Sadick Ali, which greatly injured the confederate cause, the lead-

[illegible] of Sindia, fatigued by a harassing [illegible] which had already lasted nine months, during which they had lost many thousands of [illegible] without making any substantial progress in their operations, desisted from any farther attempts against Bhopal; and, after a fortnight spent in preparation for marching, they raised the siege by moving towards Saraingpoor, at which place they cantoned."

Such was the termination of this memorable attack upon Bhopal; but the danger to that city was not yet over. Jeswunt Row Bhow, the cousin* of Juggoo Bappoo, who had succeeded to the command of his troops, employed himself during the monsoon in making preparations for renewing the siege the moment the season would permit. Vizier Mahomed, who, though his means and numbers were reduced to the lowest ebb, still preserved an unbroken spirit, employed himself during the rainy season in sending grain and stores from Raisseen to Bhopal, to enable him to sustain another attack. His difficulties, however, appeared insurmountable; the Pindarries had all joined the camp of the Bhow, and that was now reinforced by Jean Baptiste, an European† commander in the

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* Jeswunt Row Bhow was the son of Jewa Dada, the first cousin of Juggoo Bappoo.

† This officer, though called an European, was born in India. He is the half-brother of Colonel Filoze, celebrated for having betrayed Nana Furnavese.—Vide Toone's letter on the Mahrattas.

service of Sindia, who brought a well-equipped Campoo, or brigade, of eight battalions and about forty guns. Fortunately for Bhopal, a serious dissension now occurred amongst its enemies' leaders. The refusal of Jeswunt Row Bhow to make an advance of money to pay the troops of Baptiste was the first ground of discontent; this was daily aggravated, till a chance quarrel between a party of their foragers caused each to draw out their troops, and a serious affray ensued. But the followers of the Bhow, particularly the infantry, which had suffered extremely during the siege, were not able to stand against the fresh and better-disciplined brigades of Baptiste; they fled in every direction, leaving their camp to be plundered. This action took place at Sehore, where Baptiste is said to have taken one hundred and three guns of different sizes. The Bhow and some of the leaders took refuge under the walls of Bhopal, where they were permitted to shelter themselves for one night, but requested to depart early the next day, A. D. 1814. as it was apprehended that their remaining there might be a motive for another attack, which, if aided by the renewal of a hostile combination, would probably have effected the destruction of this principality in spite of the heroic efforts made in its defence. That Baptiste did not prosecute the siege has been variously accounted for: but the real cause was, that the overture made by Vizier

Mahomed at this period to the British agent* in Bundlecund had been so far favourably entertained, that the resident† at the court of Gualior had called upon Sindia to abstain from prosecuting hostilities against Bhopal, as that country gained importance when viewed as an instrument for repressing the Pindarries, whose excesses now menaced the general peace of India. The resident‡ at Nagpoor also, to whom Vizier Mahomed had sent an agent, evinced equal penetration in the delineation he early gave of the actual condition and character of this principality, and the eventual benefit that might be derived from its friendly disposition, local advantages, and resources, in the approaching contest against the predatory system which now threatened to desolate India.

Though Vizier Mahomed, when relieved from the pressure of misfortune, did not pursue his object of obtaining the protection of the English with the same ardour he at first exhibited, and the negotiations that ensued were never matured into any engagement during his life§;

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* The late Mr. Wauchope.

† Mr. Strachey.—Vide that gentleman's Correspondence.

‡ Vide Despatch from Mr. Jenkins to Mr. Secretary Adam, dated 29th October, 1814.

§ Vizier Mahomed died in 1816. In 1814 Mr. Jenkins' letter to Lord Moira states, that the British government had afforded its protection to the state of Bhopal; but this appears

yet, the knowledge of his being in constant communication with the public officers of the British government was no slight shield, as it deterred his most powerful enemies from attacking him. He was, nevertheless, continually engaged in that predatory warfare, amid which he had lived, and of which the territories of the state that he governed had long been the vortex. One of the last actions of his life was an effort to reconcile, by intermarriages, his family with that of Ghous Mahomed*. Vizier Mahomed died in February, A. D. 1816, aged fifty-one, after having governed Bhopal little more than nine years; but of this short period he had not passed one day in repose. This principality, from the hour he assumed the government until that of his death, was threatened with destruction. Such a man could alone have saved it. Though as remarkable for prowess and valour as the most desperate of the Afghan race, he was, in his manners, mild and pleasing; but his look and stature were alike commanding, and there was in his disposition a stern-

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to have been afterwards withdrawn; though by Mr. Strachey's communication from Gualior, it seems to have been our interference alone that prevented Baptiste's attack on Bhopal.

* The daughter of Ghous Mahomed was married to Nuzzer Mahomed, the second and favourite son of Vizier Mahomed; while the latter chief gave the eldest son of the Nabob, his niece, the daughter of Kurreem Mahomed, the present minister of Bhopal.

ness that inspired awe. He latterly gave way to habits of dissipation, which were believed to have shortened* his existence. All acquainted with the vicissitudes of his life, deeply regretted his death at the moment it occurred. He should have lived to behold his patriotic efforts rewarded; to see the people of the land he loved rescued from destruction, and raised to happiness and prosperity by the government which he had through life courted, and on which his hopes till the last hour of his life rested. This destiny was reserved for a son whom he selected and educated as his successor, and who proved himself every way worthy of his father.

Nuzzer Mahomed has been already mentioned as fighting and bleeding, while yet a youth, by his father's side, at the memorable siege of Bhopal. Hopeless of his eldest son, who was a slave to habits of indolence and excess, which enervated both his mind and body, Vizier Mahomed had early determined upon his successor, whose education was an object of his earnest solicitude; and, in addition to his other acquirements, Nuzzer Mahomed had learnt so well the duties of a sol-

* Vizier Mahomed, according to the account given those who knew him best to Major Henley, became during the last years of his life much addicted to intoxicating liquors; and he died of an inflammatory fever, supposed to have been brought on by that cause, after a short illness of four days.

dier, that on his father's death he stood the first in fame among the chiefs of the country. The respect for the memory of his father, combined with his own high qualities, made all the nobles press the government of Bhopal upon his acceptance.

Ghous Mahomed, who, though sunk into obscurity, was still called Nabob, made no objection to his elevation; and his eldest brother, Ameer Mahomed Khan, stupified with his excesses, was among the first to avow publicly his own disqualifications, and to urge his younger brother to take upon himself the administration of the affairs of the state. To this Nuzzer Mahomed consented; and his first efforts were directed to the favourite object of his father's life, a treaty of peace with the English government. The policy of this measure had been long under discussion, and a fear of the embarrassments it might produce had led the India government in England to desire that no such treaty should be concluded; but the outrages committed by the Pindarries forced the Governor-general to a course of measures, which made obedience to such restrictive orders impossible.

The first step of the campaign of 1817 was an engagement with the state of Bhopal, concluded A.D. 1817. at Hussingabad *, which guaranteed that territory

* This engagement was negotiated by me in concert with

to its actual ruler, and stipulated for his aiding the British army with a contingent, and co-operating to the utmost of his means in the ensuing war. No obligations were ever more faithfully fulfilled. Nuzzer Mahomed received, as the reward of his zeal and efforts, the fine province named Punj Mahal, or the five districts, which were taken from a Jaghiredar * of the Paishwah, and which not only joined the territories of Bhopal, but had formerly been an integral portion of that principality. The restoration of the fort of Islamnuggur, subsequently obtained from Sindia, though of little value, was esteemed beyond all other favours by the ruling family of Bhopal. It contained the tomb of Yar Mahomed; and its position, almost at the gates of the capital, had made its separation from the state a source of the greatest annoyance. The condition of this principality at Vizier Mahomed's death was so low, that its actual revenue could not have amounted to one lack of rupees. It was now, however, raised to a high rank among the secondary class of Native states. Its rescued territories included almost all the provinces its princes formerly possessed; and its revenues yielded from nine to ten lacks of rupees, with the expectation of soon exceeding thirty.

Lieutenant-Colonel Adams, C. B. commanding the force at Hussingabad.

* The Vinchoor chief.

Never were prospects more flattering than A.D. 1818.
those of Nuzzer Mahomed, when an unhappy accident terminated his life, and left his family and country to mourn the untimely and irreparable loss of a prince who seemed born for the times in which he lived, and who promised to be as active and successful in restoring his country to prosperity, as his father had been in saving it from destruction. His death was occasioned by the discharge of a pistol he carried about his person, which he laid down when playing in his inner apartments with his infant daughter; and it is supposed to have been fired by his brother-in-law, Foujdar Khan, a child of eight years of age, who was the only one present on this melancholy occasion. The sensation caused by his death was great, and men gave way for the *moment* to the worst suspicions. These, however, were dispelled by the minute investigation which took place, and by the conduct of all to whom such a design could have been attributed, or who could in any way have expected benefit from the event.*

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* After minutely detailing the results of the investigation which had been made, Major Henley, political agent at Bhopal, speaking of Foujdar Khan, observes: "The child had been often seen to handle the pistol when sitting by the Nabob, who had on such occasions taken it from him. He was, moreover, just of that height, that a pistol discharged from his hand, when standing by the side of the Nabob sitting on the cot in the posture described, would have taken the direction

But the general feelings and conduct of all persons, from Ghous Mahomed to the lowest Patan, banished every suspicion of Nuzzer Mahomed Khan's death being premeditated. There was but one sentiment, that of the deepest regret, and no person sought to take advantage of the accident to promote his own interests. At a consultation of the principal chiefs, it was resolved to continue to attend to the widow and ministers of the deceased prince, till the pleasure of the British government was known as to his successor; and it is remarkable, that not the slightest effort was made by any party to influence the judgment of the British agent—a sufficient proof, of itself, of the absence of all design or guilt on this unhappy occasion.

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which had been mentioned; and the circumstance of its having been fired rather from before than behind, renders it evident that the attention of the Nabob could not have been excited, as must have been the case, had any person entered and taken up the pistol.

"An assassin," the Major adds, "would have chosen other weapons, and not have risked the chance of his securing the pistol from the Nabob, whose personal prowess and courage were well known; nor was it possible such a one could have seized the pistol unperceived, and fired it in a stooping posture so close to the Nabob, without resistance being attempted. Foujdar, moreover, being now alarmed, prevaricates, and denies his former statements, which renders it probable he disguised the truth in the first instance. There is no reason, however, for supposing he was actuated by any bad intention,

Nuzzer Mahomed Khan, when he died, was only twenty-eight years of age; he had governed Bhopal three years and five months, but he has left a name that has been attained by few during the longest life. Schooled in adversity, he early attained a remarkable maturity of judgment. His appearance was noble, and his manners those of a prince who knew the value of possessing the hearts of his subjects. His mind was so superior, and his courage so elevated him above suspicion, that the whole family of the rulers of Bhopal whom he had supplanted, as well as his elder brother who had resigned his birthright to him, lived not only without restriction, but on the most intimate footing of familiarity with him, coming and going through every apartment of his palace

as he had always appeared much attached to the Nabob."—The same cause (his being the son of Ghous Mahomed) which led to these suspicions, attached to his sister, the Nabob's only wife; but her ever having had such an intent is treated by Major Henley as quite impossible. She is described as very young, being only seventeen; she is, besides, stated to be of a mild disposition, and to have been strongly attached to the Nabob, who treated her with unusual consideration. He not only resisted all the entreaties that were used to induce him to contract a second marriage, but strictly prohibited the introduction of any young females, either as slaves, servants, or otherwise, within the Mahal. In farther disproof of this it is stated, that her grief since the accident has been so great, as to produce her miscarriage,—an event that, had she cherished any ambitious views, she must have earnestly deprecated.

at their pleasure. Nuzzer Mahomed held in just detestation the general vices and indulgence of his tribe. His haram contained but one princess, and no slaves. He was a good Mahomedan, but so far removed from bigotry, that his favourite companion and minister was a Christian*. His whole

* Shahzad Musseah, or Belthazar Bourboun, with whom I am well acquainted. This person, who is an able man and a brave soldier, is the descendant of a Frenchman called Bourboun, who came to India in the time of the Emperor Akber. The following is an account given by Shahzad Musseah of his family.

"John Bourboun came from Pari, or Bevi, (probably Paris or Berni in France) in Europe, to Hindustan, during the reign of Akber, and, going to Delhi, was employed in the service of that prince. After the death of John Bourboun, the king particularly distinguished his son, Alexander Bourboun, who was entrusted with the charge of the gate of the palace of the Begums. This charge was continued in the family to the time of Furadee Bourboun, about the time that the king (Nadir Shah) destroyed Shahjehanabad, and the ruin of the empire had taken place. Furadee Bourboun also left this wicked world, leaving a son, Salvador Bourboun, who, viewing these events with disgust and sorrow, left Delhi, and came to reside at Narwar. As all the Rajas and princes of Hindustan were aware of his having been distinguished by the royal service and favour, he was treated with much consideration and respect, and lived at Narwar in great ease. No other man of consequence (foreigner I suppose) remains, in whose family can be traced the possession of an Imperial Jaghire. Sheerghur, &c. near Gualior, was the Jaghire of Bhoba, my ancestor, commonly known as the Nawaub Musseah Rago Khan. My father, Enayet Musseah (Shoohur Bourboun)

soul was absorbed, during the last two years, in plans for improving his country. He investigated every account himself, heard every complaint; and, while all speak of his kindness, benevolence, and justice, his memory is unstained by the reproach of a single act of tyranny*.

A greater loss could not have occurred to a

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was born at Gualior. Although Europeans without number have flocked to Hindustan since the arrival of John Bourboun, yet our family has not intermarried with any of them except two, and they were noble in their own tribes, and also Monsubdars (which constitutes nobility in India) of the Moghul empire; the one a Frenchman, and the other an Armenian of the Roman Catholic, otherwise our religion.

"In the year that Colonels Kamak and Popun (Camac and Popham) took Gualior, the Raja of Narwar had treacherously seized and murdered Bhoba and our other relations, and possessed himself of their property. At the time the fort was taken, my father, on account of the above calamity, was residing there, and visited Colonel Camac, to whom he related the history of our family since its arrival in Hindustan, and especially of its recent calamity. The Colonel sympathized with and comforted my father, gave him a handsome sum of money, a good house for his family, and a village in free gift. Some time after this my father came to Bhopal, where he was also treated with great kindness and respect. Since the time that the Mahrattas have occupied Gualior, the village has been resumed by them, and lost to my family."

* I had, during two years, much communication with Nuzzer Mahomed, and personally knew him; but I rely for the facts here stated, on Major Henley, the political agent at Bhopal, who enjoyed the fullest opportunities of observing and appreciating the character of this remarkable young prince.

community in the condition of Bhopal than the death of Nuzzer Mahomed; and that event was also a serious misfortune to the British government, to which this virtuous prince was firmly attached. He was exactly fitted to be the popular instrument which was required to restore order and prosperity. His mind went far beyond the usual range of those of his class. He cultivated knowledge of every description with extraordinary ardour, and had made no slight progress in the arts* foreign to the occupations of his life and the habits of his station. The fame of Nuzzer Mahomed will be long commemorated as an object of emulation to his successors; but we must despair of seeing his equal. He was, as most other such characters have been, formed by the early scenes of his life: no instructions could have conveyed the lessons he had learnt. When encouraged by the example and rewarded by the love of a noble father, he struggled with him to preserve a country rendered dearer from the extreme misery to which it was reduced; and his mind was too well formed, before the hour of success came, ever to lose that tone which it had received amid scenes of difficulty and danger.

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* Nuzzer Mahomed was particularly fond of mechanics, and could himself take to pieces and put together a watch, with the principles of the construction of which he was well acquainted.

Nuzzer Mahomed left no issue by his princess, the daughter of Ghous Mahomed, except one female child. He had not assumed the title of Nabob, though he was always addressed as such by the British, for Ghous Mahomed, who had sunk into complete obscurity, was never in any way brought forward in the connexion which was formed between that government and the actual ruler of Bhopal. In the engagement which was entered into at Hussingabad, and the treaty made after the war, by which the cession to this state and the numbers of the contingent to be maintained were finally settled, Nuzzer Mahomed Khan and his descendants were alone mentioned, and to them the government of the country was guaranteed. Mooneer Mahomed Khan*, the son of Ameer Mahomed Khan, the elder brother of Nuzzer Mahomed, has succeeded his uncle, to whose daughter he is to be married, that the interests of the family may as much as possible be united in his person.† In discussing the question

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* The right of Ghous Mahomed was never agitated. He was titular Nabob, but not ruler. Ameer Mahomed, the brother of the deceased, had publicly resigned his birth-right and declared his incompetency; but this abdication of right was very properly not considered to affect the claims of his children.

† It may be asked, if, in theory, the abdication of Ameer Mahomed Khan was very properly considered not to affect the claims of his children, would not the same rule apply equally

of succession, no reference was made to Ghous Mahomed, or his sons, who are living on the estate assigned for their support at Bhopal; nor do these appear ever to have brought forward their pretensions. It is, however, worthy of remark, that, though the representative of the family of Vizier Mahomed may now be deemed entitled to the name as well as the power of Nabob of Bhopal, that title is still given by the inhabitants to Ghous Mahomed.

The Murajee Kheil Patans of Bhopal have, as has been before remarked, some singular institutions, which arose out of their original agreement to maintain the habits and laws of their society, such as they existed in Afghanistan. It is from this patriarchal form of government that they claim * a limited privilege in the selection of

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to the children of Ghous Mahomed, who has been, like Ameer Mahomed, excluded, from his acknowledged incompetence? But it is to be replied, that the obligations and engagements of the British government have been exclusively contracted with the family of Vizier Mahomed, who alone have been recognized as rulers of Bhopal. Nor can either faith or policy call upon us to revive or support the obsolete claims of a family, to which, though long excluded from power, a titular rank and a provision is still granted by the prejudices of their relations and countrymen.

* The rights of Afghans and other tribes in this particular are invariably limited by usage. They must choose a member of the ruling family; and the Murajee Kheil chiefs of Bhopal appear to have always adhered as closely to hereditary suc-

their chief, to whom, however, they deny the right of interfering in the jurisdiction of their respective families. The habits and character of this body of men demand our attention. With every good disposition to the British government, and gratitude for the benefits they have derived from it, they are not only jealous of encroachment on their usages, but impatient of neglect, and turbulent in a degree that requires much care in conducting our relations with them. They are, however, deserving both of that solicitude and favour which they have hitherto received; for Bhopal is at this moment, and will continue while well managed, an essential point of strength in Central India.

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cession as attention to the general safety during a state of anarchy and continual warfare would admit.

CHAPTER X.

Rise, progress, and annihilation of the Pindarries.

The Pindarries, though they never took deep root in Central India, made that country their home, or rather head-quarters, for the short period they continued formidable as enemies to the peace of India; and cannot, therefore, be excluded from its history. Some general observations on the origin, character, and constitution of these plunderers, and a short sketch of the lives of their most remarkable chiefs, will sufficiently illustrate this part of the subject.

The name of Pindarry occurs in Indian history so early as A. D. 1689*, but it is only of late years that this race, or rather class of men, have attracted attention, or acquired importance. From obscure freebooters, they rose into sufficient consequence to be deemed useful auxiliaries by the different Mahratta powers, whose desultory mode

* Poonapah, Pindarry, is mentioned as being, in the latter part of the reign of Aarangzebe, an auxiliary of Mahratta plunderers.—Scott's Ferishta, vol. ii. p. 121.

of warfare was suited to their predatory habits. Their aid was purchased by occasional grants of land, or, more correctly speaking, by a tacit admission of their right to possess tracts which they had usurped, and a privilege of plundering, even beyond the usual license given to a Mahratta army. They took substantive form under this system; chiefs acquired reputation, and their claims to the service of their adherents became hereditary, and were transmitted to their descendants. Tribes were cemented in federal union, and common motives of action led to somewhat of a common interest being established throughout the whole of this lawless community.

The Pindarries have been compared to the first Mahrattas; but, though alike in character and habits, there were essential points of difference. The adherents of Sevajee and his successors were united and animated by the ties of brotherhood, as well as by the prejudices of religion. They were of one tribe, and almost of one province. They were not impelled by the mere love of plunder, and the ambition of a martial chief; they had the more legitimate, and, therefore, the more permanent motives, of attachment to their native soil and to the religion of their fathers, with the consequent resentment against the intolerant and oppressive rulers by whom they were assailed. These causes, though they might have checked the increase of their numbers, gave them an

union of interest and action, which was unknown to the Pindarries. It was, however, one of the greatest evils attending the growing numbers of the latter, that, though divided, and only susceptible of union through the existence of some common principle of action, they became, from the very looseness of their composition, a nucleus to attract what was floating and unattached in the community; and thus presented, at all moments, a mass of materials which an able and popular leader might use, either for the destruction of others, or for his own aggrandisement.

The Pindarries, when they came to a rich country, had neither the means nor inclination, like the Tartars, to whom also they have been compared, to settle and repose. Like swarms of locusts, acting from instinct, they destroyed and left waste whatever province they visited. Their chiefs had, from grants or by usurpation, obtained small territorial possessions; but the revenues of their land were never equal to the maintenance of one-tenth part of their numbers, and they could, therefore, only be supported by plunder: their force, within the last twenty years that they were settled in Central India, has been computed at from twenty to thirty thousand horse of all descriptions. But it was evidently impossible to form a correct estimate of a body whose numbers were so continually varying, who were diminished by misfortune and swelled by success, who coa-

lesced, from similarity of habits and condition, with every chief who was tempted, by the weakness or the oppression of the power he served, to throw off his allegiance, and to become a freebooter. It is also to be observed, that the Pindarries were fed and nourished by the very miseries they created; for, as their predatory invasions extended, property became insecure, and those who were ruined by their depredations were afterwards compelled to have recourse to a life of violence, as the only means of subsistence left them. They joined the stream which they could not withstand, and endeavoured to redeem their own losses by the plunder of others. Such facts as these rendered fallacious all calculation regarding the numerical strength of the Pindarries, who were, indeed, so amalgamated with the whole of the loose part of the military population of India, that it had become a system, not a particular force, that was to be subdued.

Lines of defence against the ravages of the Pindarries, and partial expeditions against their leaders, were equally ineffectual to remedy this evil; for, while efforts were made to crush one head of the hydra, others arose: and the resources of those governments which tried to suppress them, were vainly wasted against an enemy who had every thing to hope from success, and whose condition defeat did not render more desperate. To understand this fact, it is necessary to advert to the

mode of warfare pursued by these freebooters. When they set out on an expedition, they placed themselves under the guidance of one or more chosen leaders, called Lubbirdahs *, who were selected on account of their knowledge of the country that it was meant to plunder. The Pindarries were neither encumbered by tents nor baggage; each horseman carried a few cakes of bread for his own subsistence, and some seeds of grain for his horse. The party, which usually consisted of two or three thousand good horse, with a proportion of mounted followers, advanced at the rapid rate of forty or fifty miles a-day, neither turning to the right nor left till they arrived at their place of destination. They then divided, and made a sweep of all the cattle and property they could find; committing at the same time the most horrid atrocities, and destroying what they could not carry away. They trusted to the secrecy and suddenness of the irruption for avoiding those who guarded the frontiers of the countries they invaded; and before a force could be brought against them, they were on their return. Their

* The Lubbirudhs, according to Major Henley's manuscript notes, were not selected for each expedition; but their situation in the Durrah, or Pindarry camp, had an affinity to that which is termed Heraval, or leader of the van, among Rajpoots. When an expedition was determined on, the Lubbirudh's moving out with his standard was the signal for march. These persons were always remarkable for intelligence and activity.

chief strength lay in their being intangible. If pursued, they made marches of extraordinary length, (sometimes upwards of sixty miles,) by roads almost impracticable for regular troops. If overtaken, they dispersed, and reassembled at an appointed rendezvous; if followed to the country from which they issued, they broke into small parties. Their wealth, their booty, and their families, were scattered over a wide region, in which they found protection amid the mountains, and in the fastnesses belonging to themselves and to those with whom they were either openly or secretly connected; but no where did they present any point of attack: and the defeat of a party, the destruction of one of their cantonments, or the temporary occupation of some of their strong holds, produced no effect, beyond the ruin of an individual freebooter, whose place was instantly supplied by another, generally of more desperate fortune, and therefore more eager for enterprise.

The Pindarries, who had arisen, like masses of putrefaction in animal matter, out of the corruption of weak and expiring states, had, fortunately, none of those bonds of union which unite men in adversity. They had neither the tie of religious, nor of national feeling. They were men of all lands and all religions. They had been brought together less by despair than by deeming the life of a plunderer, in the actual state of India, as one of small hazard, but of great indulgence. A body

so constituted, and of such a character, could only be formidable when considered as part of a distempered community, with every branch of which they were more or less connected. In this view they had importance, whether we refer to the dangerous contagion of their example, or the probability that they would early triumph over what little remained of government in Central India, and swell their bands with all its military population.

The Pindarries who first settled in Central India may be said to have been introduced by the Mahrattas. Ghazi u Deen *, a person who served under the first Bajerow, died when employed with a detachment at Oojein. He left two sons, Gurdee Khan and Shah Baz Khan. The eldest, though only sixteen years of age, succeeded to the command of a party which was sent on all plundering excursions; and their successes pleased Mulhar Row Holkar so much, that he presented their chief with a golden flag†, which enabled

* According to the account given by Captain Tod, this person, who was a horseman in the service of the first Bajerow, was the son of a person named Chekun, who had been a Jemadar of Bildars with Sevajee. The same station had been filled by Nustoo, the father of Chekun, who was a Mahomedan of the tribe of Tourace.

† This flag is termed Zeree, or golden. It was this distinction which first gave the Pindarries consequence as a body among the Mahrattas, and it has led to an erroneous belief that this class of troops was first introduced by Mulhar Row Holkar.

him to increase his numbers. His men, it is particularly mentioned, were encamped separate from the other troops, and were professed plunderers; and, though he was known by the name of his tribe, Toorace, (which term is still used among this class to signify a man of distinction,) his followers were collectively called Pindarries*, a name that for a century has been given, in this part of India, to lawless freebooters.

Gurdee Khan accompanied Mulhar Row on his expedition to Hindustan, and was attached to that leader during his life. The actions of the freebooters he commanded are blended with those of the Mahrattas with whom they were associated; though their excesses were, perhaps, a shade worse, as they avowedly lived on pillage. Defenceless provinces, which it was the object of predatory conquerors to lay waste with a merciless sword, were the points to which the efforts of the Pindarries were directed; but it was to plunder, not to fight, that they were sent in front of other troops: and they never

* Many different conjectures have been offered as to the etymology of the term Pindarry. The most popular one among the Natives is, that they derived it from their dissolute habits leading them constantly to resort to the shops of the sellers of an intoxicated drink termed Pinda. Kurreem Khan told me, he had never heard any other reason given for this name; and Major Henley had this etymology confirmed by the most intelligent of the Pindarries of whom he enquired.

established any reputation as a body for valour, nor is the history of their excesses relieved by the recurrence of those instances of humanity and generosity, which usually chequer the narrative of the most desperate races of depredators. Condemned from their origin to be the very scavengers of Mahrattas, their habits and character took, from the first, a shape suited to the work they had to perform. Courage and enterprise were often the qualities of their leaders, and, no doubt, of many of their followers; but, amid reverses and successes, none appear to have displayed any higher virtues. It is, indeed, an extraordinary fact, that not one of these marauders ever established a claim to high reputation; all appear to have shared in the ignorance, the meanness, the rapacity, and unfeeling cruelty, by which they were, as a body *, distinguished. The narrative of such a race has very little variety. Gurdee Khan left his camp, or Durrah, as it was now called, to his son Lal Mahomed, who was succeeded by his son Emam Buksh. The power of this chief, however, did not remain,

* On asking an intelligent old Pindarry, who came to me on the part of Kurreem Khan, the reason of this absence of high character, he gave me a short and shrewd answer: "Our occupation (said he) was incompatible with the fine virtues "and qualities you state; and I suppose, if any of our people "ever had them, the first effect of such good feeling would be, "to make them leave our community."

as he wished, in his family. A number of officers established independent commands. Of Lal Mahomed little is said; and Emam Buksh, who is now a pensioner in Bhopal, though he received a village from Alia Bhye, was never a leader of any eminence. A person of the name of Kauder Buksh, an ignorant but brave man, who was born in the Pindarry camp, was of late years the chief leader of this tribe in Holkar's service. The vicissitudes of his life have nothing beyond the common events of a Pindarry. He surrendered towards the conclusion of the late war*, and is now settled in the province of Goruckpoor in Hindustan, a dependant upon the bounty of the British government. Of the others who remained with the house of Holkar throughout the late scenes of distraction, Tukoo and Bahadur Khan were the two next in rank to Kauder Buksh. They both delivered themselves up, and have had small portions of land given them, which they cultivate.

The followers of the above leaders never amounted to more than four or five thousand; but they continued faithful throughout to the fam they served, and obtained, from this, the dis appellation of Holkar Shahy, or adhere Holkar.

* When this man surrendered himself to me I could hardly believe, from his manners and conversation, he was the person he was stated to be. His sole me appeared to be his courage.

During the time of Mulhar Row and Tuckajee Holkar, the Pindarries, who always encamped separately, had, when within the Mahratta territories and not permitted to plunder, an allowance, which averaged four annas*, or a quarter of a rupee, a day; and they farther supported themselves by employing their small horses and bullocks in carrying grain, forage, and wood, for which articles the Pindarry bazar was the great mart. When let loose to plunder, which was always the case some days before the army entered an enemy's country, all allowances stopped; no restraint whatever was put upon these freebooters till the campaign was over, when the Mahratta commander, if he had the power, generally seized the Pindarry chiefs, or surrounded their camps, and forced them to yield up the greater part of their booty. A knowledge of this practice led the Pindarries to redouble their excesses, that they might be able to satisfy, without ruin, the expected rapacity of their employers.

Till the period of the insanity of Jeswunt Row Holkar, the Pindarry chiefs, who served his [illegible] were kept in their proper situation. Though they commanded large bodies of men, they were never allowed to sit down in the presence of the prince; and when Jeswunt Row, previous to his expedition to the Punjab, met Dowlet

* Sixpence-halfpenny English money.

Row Sindia, he reproached that prince for the encouragement he had given the Pindarry chiefs, by his personal intercourse with them, and by the high titles and grants of land which he had bestowed on men unworthy of such distinction. Jeswunt Row was quite aware of the danger of their progress; and one of his favourite plans was their complete extirpation; but when he became insane, Toolsah Bhye, and those who contended for his power, sought to increase their strength by every means. The Pindarry chiefs of the Holkar Shahy class, consequently, rose into consideration; and they were not only treated with respect, but had lands assigned them for the subsistence of their followers.

It has been mentioned that the Pindarry chief, Ghazi u Deen, when he died at Oojein, left two sons, and that the eldest, Gurdee Khan, followed the fortunes of Mulhar Row Holkar. The second son, Shah Baz Khan*, who was a child at the death of his father, when he grew up entered the service of Ranojee Sindia, whose favour raised him to a command. His party, from the first, appear to have been Pindarries. Shah Baz attended Ranojee into Hindustan, and was killed in an action at Tonk in the Jeypoor country. He left two sons, Hera and Burrun, both of whom became

* He was living then at his native village of Muzagong, near Poona.

distinguished Pindarry leaders in the army of Madhajee Sindia, with which they were employed in Hindustan. When that chief died, they came to Malwa. Having encamped with about five thousand followers near Bersiah*, they offered their services to the state of Bhopal, that they might, under the sanction of its prince, invade
A.D. 1797. and lay waste the territories of Nagpoor, with which government that petty state was then at war. This occurred immediately after the death of Chutta Khan, when Raja Himut Rao was in nominal charge of the office of Dewan. Caution prevented the offers of these freebooters (who were deemed adherents of the family of Sindia) being accepted, and they went to Nagpoor, where Ragojee Bhonslah readily entertained them; and the first order they received from that prince was to lay waste the country of Bhopal, which was then in a most flourishing condition. This service they performed so effectually, that the principality has not to this day recovered the miseries and horrors they inflicted. It was a small consolation to those who suffered from the cruel ravages of the Pindarries, that the avarice of the Raja of Nagpoor was so excited by the exaggerated report of the booty they had obtained, that he not only surrounded and plundered their camp when they

* Khyalee Ram (who is now in my service) was at this period manager of Bersiah.

returned to his capital, but seized Burrun, who died in confinement, while his brother Hera fled to Dowlet Row Sindia at Poona, and died soon afterwards at Boochanpoor.

The camp of Hera descended to his sons, Dost Mahomed and Wasil Mahomed, who continued, throughout a career which was attended by the common vicissitudes of Pindarry chiefs, professed adherents of Dowlet Row Sindia, to whom they were generally obedient, though they shewed on some occasions little respect for his orders. Their cantonment was usually fixed in the Eastern quarter of Malwa. Dost Mahomed died some years ago, and the sole command of the Durrah devolved on his brother, Wasil Mahomed, who distinguished himself by leading some bodies of freebooters, which plundered the British territories, and in consequence incurred the just resentment of that government. When the Pindarries were broken and dispersed in the campaign of 1817 and 18, Wasil Mahomed, who had been for some time a solitary fugitive, came to Gualior, where he, no doubt, thought Dowlet Row Sindia would still protect him. Though he dwelt in secret, he was discovered by the vigilance of the British representative, who demanded* his seizure with a firmness that was not to be evaded, and, though the struggle

* Letter from the Acting Resident, Captain J. Stewart, to the Chief Secretary, dated 25th May, 1818.

between the fulfilment of his engagements and feelings of honour made Sindia hesitate, he was at last true to the former, and delivered up the Pindarry chief. Wasil Mahomed was sent to Ghazipoor, where he was treated by the magistrate with every kindness, and the British government, in a spirit of liberal policy, contemplated forgiving his crimes, and making a provision for him, as it had done for others, within its own provinces. His restless spirit, however, could not brook his degradation and confinement. He attempted to escape, but finding his design discovered*, he swallowed poison, which he had prepared, and perished on the spot.

The camp of Burrun†, after he was made prisoner, was transferred to a leader named Dooblah Jemadar; at whose death his son Rajun became the nominal head; but the real authority devolved upon a bolder chief, who raised himself by his energy and enterprise to the principal command. This person, whose name was Cheetoo, was a native of Mewat near Delhi. He had first been seized as a slave, and next adopted as Kowur, or son, by Dooblah Khan; and, after many vicissitudes, attained such rank as to be

* Vide Mr. Bird's letter to the Chief Secretary, 13th October, 1819.

† When Burrun died, his son Dadoo Buksh, who was with Kureem, did not succeed to any authority. This man now cultivates a few beeghs in a village near Bhopal.

praised for the consideration with which he treated the son of his benefactor, whom he continued to consider the ostensible head of the camp. Cheetoo, however, in this and most other acts of his life, evinced considerable art and prudence. He not only conciliated the Pindarries by attention to Rajun, for whom they had an hereditary respect, but also derived great benefit from being associated with a man of known humanity, and who enjoyed a reputation for good faith which was often useful to the tribes.

It has been before stated, that all the Pindarries joined Dowlet Row Sindia, when he came to Central India in A. D. 1804, and that their chiefs were, through the recommendation of Sirjee Row Ghatkia, honoured with titles. Those of Cheetoo* were engraved upon his seal, and he at this period began to be ranked among the ablest, as well as the most powerful, of his class. He had, in the early part of his career, been much indebted to Kurreem Khan, in whose party he had served; and when the latter escaped from Dowlet Row Sindia, Cheetoo seemed to share the feelings of other Pindarries, and united his whole force apparently to assist him in revenging his wrongs; but, at the

* The name he assumed was Nabob Mahomed Kunud Khan Mustakeem Jung (or, the firm in war); but he continued to be known by his original appellation of Cheetoo, which is more of a Hindu than a Mahomedan name: it was common among the Pindarries to give familiar, and short appellations

moment when the union of these powerful free-booters alarmed all India, the wily Cheetoo not only forsook his former commander, but, joining his enemies, aided to effect his ruin, and by this act of treachery gained the station to which he aspired, the first rank, undisputed, among the Pindarry leaders.

Cheetoo had fixed his abode amid the rugged hills and wild forests that lie between the Northern bank of the Nerbudda and the Vindhya mountains. The range of this tract, which he possessed, was bounded to the East by the Bhopal territories, and to the West by the lands of the Raja of Baglee. His cantonments were near the village of Nimar opposite Hindia, and he himself resided there, or at Sutwass. He had besides small possessions on the table land, and he latterly established his authority over the district of Tallein in Omutwarra. This chief, during the last years of his power, seldom went far from head-quarters; but parties from his camp, which was computed at twelve thousand horse, ravaged in every direction. He always professed allegiance to Dowlet Row Sindia, but the territories of that prince, though generally spared, were not exempted from occasional attacks, and several armies were, in consequence, sent from Gualior against him and other leaders of Pindarries; but whether from the insincerity of the prince, the weakness of those employed, the mutinies of their troops, or

the collision of interests, which continually existed between Sindia's half-independent delegates, or all these causes combined, none were successful. Much had been expected from an expedition against this class of freebooters, commanded by Jean Baptiste, who was himself a brave, energetic man, and had under him one of the most efficient Campoos, or divisions in the army; but his efforts (though he defeated them and their ally, Jeswunt Row Bhow) terminated in his concluding a treaty, by which, on the Pindarry chiefs agreeing to refrain from plunder, and to furnish a body of troops to serve Dowlet Row Sindia, he consented to cede to them specific lands for their subsistence. Many causes made Sindia hesitate* before he ventured to ratify this engagement; among others was the very natural one, that a great proportion of the lands, of which his European commander had thus liberally disposed, did not belong to him, but to the Paishwah, the Puar, and Holkar; and though he had often made free with the substance of their power and property, he had on most occasions pretended to observe forms † with these princes. A very short period, however, satisfied him, that he must either

* Vide letter from the Resident at Sindia's court, 20th May, 1815.

† For the first remarkable deviation from an observance of the forms of Mahratta relations on the part of Dowlet Row Sindia, vide p. 136.

confirm the compact into which his general had entered, or submit to have his country again plundered. Sunnuds, or orders, were, in consequence, given to different chiefs, among whom Cheetoo was one of the principal. He received grants of five districts * for the support of his troops. This was the first occasion on which he was recognized as a chief in the exercise of legitimate rule, and it might have led, at no distant date, to important changes, had not this leader and others of his description been so intoxicated with success, as to become the dupes of the designing intrigues of imbecile courts, who, while they dreaded the excesses of these freebooters, sought to use them as instruments for annoying their enemies; but to command, it was necessary to divide them, and to this object the efforts of their policy were always directed.

Cheetoo retired from Omutwarra, after taking possession of the lands ceded to him, to his cantonments on the Nerbudda; and during the course of next year his marauding parties were encountered by detachments of British troops, which
A.D. 1816. had, in consequence of the subsidiary alliance concluded with the Raja of Nagpoor, advanced to the Southern banks of that river.

In the following year the British armies entered

* These districts were Nimar, Tallein, Sutwass, Kilchipoor, and the tribute of Rajghur.

Central India. Cheetoo, who with other Pindarry chiefs had been denounced as a criminal, and an enemy of the public peace, left his fastnesses* without an effort to defend them. He was closely pursued to Aggur, whence he went to the skirts of Mewar; but on the approach of a British detachment towards that quarter, he again fled, and returned, after a wide circuit, to the strong country whence he had been at first expelled. Here, however, he had no rest. His main body was attacked and routed; and his followers, when divided, were every where pursued by detachments of the British army, till they were so broken-spirited that they became the prey of the petty Rajpoot chiefs and village officers, who plundered them with a zeal and activity that was equally prompted by the desire of gain, and a recollection of the miseries they had long endured from these base and cruel freebooters.

Cheetoo, having lost his power without making one single struggle, now wandered a mere fugitive with his associate Rajun, and thirty or forty followers, in the deep and almost inaccessible woods of Eirwass, the Gond† chief of which, who had been before united with him

* His force, when he commenced this flight, amounted to between four and five thousand horse of all descriptions. He had also, when at Nimar, five small guns and two hundred infantry.

† Koobhal Singh.

in guilt, was still in secret his friend. But even here he soon found himself so pressed, that he could not remain. He had heard that the British government had pledged itself to treat the Pindarry chiefs who surrendered, with mercy and generosity; but his ignorance could not understand the motives of such conduct, and his mind continued to waver betwixt the hopes of pardon and the fear of punishment. In this temper he repaired to Bhopal, apparently to seek the intercession of the Naboh; but when he seemed to have given himself up, his agitated mind again took the alarm, and he fled from the protection he had the moment before courted, to regain his former haunts, which a division of the British army had now approached, and begun to penetrate with a number of detachments. Though the offers to Cheetoo were repeated, his alarm, chiefly excited by a fear of transportation*, prevented his accepting them; and when the better sense of Rajun induced him to submit, and secure a respectable provision, Cheetoo crossed the Nerbudda, and proceeded to the fortress of Asseer, whence he was summoned

* The Natives of the interior of India term transportation *Kala Panee*, or black water, (alluding to the sea) and have an indescribable horror at it. An agent of mine, who was for some days with Cheetoo, told me he raved continually about Kala Panee, and that one of his followers assured him, when the Pindarry chief slept, he used in his dreams to repeat these dreaded words aloud.

to join Appah Saheb, the Ex-Raja of Nagpoor, who had escaped from confinement, and was collecting adherents among the Mahadeo hills. The Pindarry chief now became the guide of this prince to the vicinity of Asseer; but he had hardly reached that place of fancied security, when an English detachment forced his small body of followers to disperse. Cheetoo fled, with his son and five remaining adherents, towards his former place of refuge, the jungles of Eirwass; but he was closely pursued by numerous small parties, while others occupied every place from which he could derive a day's food. His last friend, Kooshal Singh of Eirwass, came into one of the British camps to avoid the suspicion of concealing him, and this was the signal for the aid even of robbers being withheld from this once-celebrated leader, who was now tracked, like a hunted animal, through the jungles, by the prints of his horse's hoofs *. Driven by the increasing vigour of the pursuit from every well-known haunt, forced by hunger to separate from his son and his last companions, Cheetoo, while seeking shelter in a deep recess of the forest, was sprung upon and killed by a tiger. When accounts of this event were brought to a local

* He rode a horse with remarkable large hoofs, a measure of this animal's foot was obtained, and the flight of Cheetoo literally tracked by it.

officer of Holkar's government, he hastened to the spot. The horse, saddle, sword*, ornaments, some money, and some recent grants he had obtained from the Ex-Raja of Nagpoor, and part of the body of the Pindarry chief, were found, where he had been first seized; but, aware of the necessity of establishing his death beyond all doubt, they traced the tiger to his den; and though the animal, alarmed at their approach, had left it, they discovered the head of Cheetoo in a perfect state, which they afterwards brought† to the English camp then besieging Asseerghur, in confirmation of the facts they asserted. These, however, could not now be doubted, and the head of the Pindarry was given for interment to the unfortunate Mahomed Punnah, his son, who was made prisoner the day after his father's death. This youth had been deaf from his infancy, and possessed but a weak intellect: he was, in consequence, deemed more an object of charity than punishment. Besides, criminal as he was, the fate of his father had been such as to excite commiseration, and to satisfy justice. Mahomed Punnah, therefore, was released, and transferred to the go-

* Holkar's local officer sent these articles to Captain Watson, who was in command of the detachments on the North bank of the Nerbudda.

† The head was brought to me by Nanah, a Brahmin Zemindar of Kantapoor, the district in which Cheetoo was killed.

vernment of Holkar, from whom he has received a few fields for subsistence.

The Pindarry leader Kurreem Khan, who at one period attained greater power and independence than any of his rivals, states himself* to be the son of Mahomed Dawud, who commanded a body of plunderers in the service of the Paishwah Ragobah. According to his own account, he was born near Bersiah; and the earliest event of which he had any recollection was, his father's being killed, when he was eight years of age, at Shahpoor; on which his uncle, Yar Mahomed, succeeded to the command of the camp. This latter chief served Ragobah till the latter joined the English, when he entered the service of Madhajee Sindia, with whom he proceeded to Hindustan, where he remained until his nephew was twenty years of age.

Kurreem states, that he had received a promise from Madhajee Sindia of a settlement in Malwa, into which he came with De Boigne's army, and was present at the defeat of Holkar's troops near the Lakheree Ghaut. The correctness of these facts may be doubted; for, several years after-

* This chief, who delivered himself up to me, remained a long time in my camp. I requested him to dictate (he cannot write) an account of his life, which, though full of exaggeration, is no doubt correct in the general facts, and I have found it useful by comparing it with other accounts.

wards, when Hera and Burrun offered their services to the Bhopal government, and on being refused became the scourges of that state. Kurreem, who shared in the spoils, was only at the head of five or six hundred men. He fled from Nagpoor on the confinement of Burrun, and joined Dowlet Row Sindia, who had just ascended the Musnud, and was preparing, with other Mahratta chiefs, to attack the Nizam. In the bloodless but eventful campaign that ensued, Kurreem asserts that he gained more plunder than ever he did at any other period of his life. His fears for this booty induced him to leave, or rather to escape from, Sindia's army in the Deckan, and come to Central India, where, on his arrival, he offered his services to Jeswunt Row Holkar, by whom he was entertained, and directed to attend Kurreem u Deen to reinforce his brother Ameer Khan, who had recently been obliged to retreat from Saugur. Kurreem Khan was now the commander of between two and three thousand horse; but apprehensions for the safety of his property made this wary leader soon withdraw himself from the service of Jeswunt Row; and while he entreated to be again admitted among the adherents of Sindia, he opened a correspondence with Ameer Khan, from whom he solicited an asylum for his family. The Patan chief, anxious to swell the number of his adherents, complied with his request; but he had soon cause to repent of this connexion, for, when en-

gaged in hostilities with Dowlet Row Sindia, Kurreem formed a junction with other Pindarry leaders, and made himself master of the town and districts of Shujahalpoor: in the possession of which, as well as of Bersiah, which he had recently conquered from the Puar family, he was confirmed by Sindia, when that prince returned from the Deckan, after his unsuccessful campaign against A.D. 1804. the English.

Kurreem Khan, who had been created a nabob A.D. 1805. by Sindia, married a lady of that branch of the family of Bhopal which is settled at Khatghur: a connexion which he expected would increase his respectability, and promote the ambitious views which he at this period entertained. Taking advantage of the absence of Sindia and Holkar, who were both engaged on the frontiers of Hindustan, he added, by conquest, several rich districts* to those he before possessed. He was now at the very zenith of his power, and a Pindarry chief appeared for the first time on the point of becoming the prince of a regular state. Kurreem certainly cherished this ambition, and was active in preparing means to effect his object. He enlisted a thousand infantry, and cast two guns, which, with two he before possessed, constituted

* Ashta, Sehore, Ichawur, Sarungpoor, and Shahjehanpoor, were on this occasion subjected to Kurreem Khan's authority.

his park of artillery. He also formed a Pagah, or body of household troops, amounting to twelve hundred, which, added to ten thousand Pindarries now under his command, made him truly formidable. An invitation from Ghous Mahomed, as has been already noticed, carried Kurreem to Bhopal; but the poverty of that state, and the gallantry and enterprise of Vizier Mahomed, soon obliged him to renounce the hopes he had indulged of increasing his territories in that quarter. This effort had just failed, when he was summoned to attend Dowlet Row Sindia, who had, under various pretences, advanced from his capital with the intention of destroying him. This was, however, difficult to accomplish by open force; art was therefore resorted to, and never was more consummate cunning displayed than by the Mahratta prince on this occasion. Success had inflated the vanity, and augmented the self-confidence, of the Pindarry leader, who advanced to meet a superior, to whom he professed allegiance, with a state hardly inferior to his own. Dowlet Row, who had encamped near the fortress of Suttunbaree, in the vicinity of Bersiah, at first flattered Kurreem with the hopes of giving him that strong-hold, when it was reduced. To give full weight to these flattering delusions, Sindia proposed to pay a visit to Kurreem Khan, who, though in general sufficiently wary and cautious, seems to have been completely the dupe of his own exagge-

rated anticipations of splendid fortune. A Mus-nud*, or throne, of rupees, made one part of the present he bestowed upon his visitor. Sindia pretended at this visit, and for several days afterwards, to be quite delighted with the abilities he discovered in Kurreem, who, he declared, possessed the combined qualities of a soldier and a statesman, which he had so long sought for in vain. All the requests of the Pindarry chief were readily complied with, and he asked, in addition to what he had been before promised, several valuable districts, and proffered security for an advance of A.D. 1807. four lacks and a half of rupees, on these places being given up to him. The Sunnuds were directed to be prepared, and a rich dress of investiture was ostentatiously made ready. Some of the older Pindarries, who had seen their chiefs on former occasions seized and plundered, were not remiss in their warnings to Kurreem, whom they reminded of Mahratta treachery; but he had satisfied himself of his perfect security, and Sindia had managed either to bribe or deceive every individual in whom he reposed confidence.

On the day appointed for his departure to take possession of his new districts, Kurreem was in-

* The Mushud was made of one lack and twenty-five thousand rupees, and covered with a rich cloth, on which Sindia was seated. This mode of making a present to a superior who condescends to visit an inferior, is very usual in India.

vited to pay his last visit, at which it was proposed to complete what remained of the settlement of his affairs. He came with few attendants, and was received with singular honour. The Summuds were called for, dresses were made ready, and every thing, in short, that could lull suspicion took place. The farce, however, approached its conclusion. Sindia having retired on some pretext, armed men rushed from behind the tent walls, and the vain-glorious Pindarry, with some of his principal adherents*, were made prisoners. A cannon being fired to announce that the first part of the scheme had succeeded, the troops which had been drawn up to shew respect to Kurreem, as well as those that were to accompany him to the countries assigned to him, moved, the moment they heard the signal, against the Pindarry camp. The followers of Kurreem took early alarm, but, though few were killed, they lost almost all their property, and the army of Sindia, glutted with plunder, extolled the abilities of their chief, who had shewn on this occasion such proficiency in the art which constitutes the highest quality of a Mahratta prince; and his fame was doubly enhanced, from his force being

* Kurreem's brother, Hera, did not accompany him to the Durbar. He was, however, taken by Sindia's troops, who attacked the Pindarry camp.

so small in comparison with the freebooter's whom he had so successfully entrapped.

The news of Kurreem's disasters were carried with incredible celerity to his family at Shujahalpoor, where his treasure and property, said to be very great, were deposited. His mother, though extremely old, acted with much energy. She instantly loaded all that was portable, and fled towards the jungles of Baglee, where she was joined by a large body of Pindarries. But, as the dread of Sindia's power made all in that quarter refuse her shelter, she moved to the Westward, and found a place of refuge in the territories of Zalim Singh, the regent of Kotah.

Kurreem was for four years kept prisoner at Gualior; but, though strictly watched, his confinement was not severe. He had directed his Pindarries to plunder every where, and particularly in the territories of Sindia. They acted in small parties: one of the largest that kept together, was that under his nephew, Namdar Khan. Dowlet Row Sindia, after long refusing to release the Pindarry chief, was at last tempted by an offer of six lacks of rupees, for the payment of which, and one lack more to the officers of the court by whom this settlement was negotiated, Kurreem obtained the security of Zalim Singh. After his release, an effort was made to obliterate past occurrences, by bestowing upon him the most

honourable presents, and treating him with every mark of distinction. But the wound he had received was too deep to be easily healed; and he no sooner regained his liberty and re-assembled his Pindarries, who came to join him from every quarter, than he commenced his depredations, and, settling himself at Shujahalpoor, was soon in possession of more extensive territories than before his captivity.

A.D. 1808. At this period Kurreem was joined by the whole force of Cheetoo, whose junction, connected with the relations of friendship that were known to subsist between these chiefs and Ameer Khan, then in the very zenith of his power, caused a most serious sensation throughout all India: nor was it a causeless fear. The host of plunderers that one leading spirit might have directed to any given point, could not have then been less than sixty thousand horse. The combination was, fortunately, of short duration. Kurreem Khan, whose disposition was violent, was led by his resentment against Dowlet Row to commit great excesses in his dominions. That prince, ashamed and alarmed at the consequences of his own weak-sighted and avaricious policy, which had let loose such a scourge on his country, directed one of his principal commanders, Juggoo Bappoo, to march immediately against the Pindarry chief, and to make every effort to effect his destruction. Cheetoo, who had previously some difference with Kurreem, was easi-

ly persuaded to join against him; and Kurreem's camp was attacked and routed in the province of Omutwarra. He fled from the field to the country of Kotah. The wary ruler of that state, however, not desiring to offend Sindia, entreated his former friend to keep at a distance; but while he advised him personally to seek the protection of Ameer Khan, he furnished an asylum to his family and property.

Ameer Khan, to whom Kurreem went, on pretext of recommending him to the favour of Toolsah Bhye, made him over to Ghuffoor Khan, with whom he remained under restraint, amid the revolutions of Holkar's government, for a period of three years; during which his camp, acting generally under Namdar Khan, was engaged in various operations, principally at the siege of Bhopal; a service on which the nephew of Kurreem obtained much personal credit, but his uncle who always maintained a correspondence with him, asserts in his narrative that he only acted in strict conformity with his orders.

A few months before the British troops entered Malva, Kurreem Khan made his escape from Holkar's camp, and joined his adherents at Bersiah. He states as the motive of his conduct upon this occasion, that he received a letter from Dowlet Row Sindia, offering not only to forget the past, and restore his former possessions, but to add Ashta and other districts, provided he

A.D.1817. would act in concert with the Mahratta confederacy against the English in an approaching war with that nation.

When the British detachments were on the point of crossing the Nerbudda, Kurreem Khan (according to his own statement) joined, in conformity with Dewlet Row Sindia's orders, the camp of Wasil Mahomed, and they were within seven coss of Narwar, and only forty coss from Gualior, to which place they had been ordered, when a special and confidential Brahmin came from Sindia, directing them to keep at a distance, as he was so situated by the advance of the British armies that he could give them no protection.

This intelligence threw the freebooters into dismay and indignation; a resolution was immediately taken to march to the Westward, and join Holkar's army, which, they heard, had proceeded from the borders of the Kotah country towards Mahidpoor.

Though resentment at what they deemed Sindia's defection from a contest to which he had invited them, made them plunder as much as they could of his country, their principal object now was to provide for their own safety. Every day brought reports of British corps advancing in all directions, by the operations of which Kur-
A.D.1817. reem was so harassed and alarmed, that, after entering Harrowtee, he could only escape by aban-

dering his family and great part of his baggage*; which he did, and pushed on without a halt to join Holkar's army, then encamped near Mundissor. The Pindarries with Kurreem were so reduced by their flight, that they did not, when they reached Holkar, exceed five thousand men. An offer of their services was made, which was rejected by the ministers of that prince, who had, subsequent to the battle of Mahidpoor, no thoughts but how to save themselves from ruin; and after a few days of hesitation, Kurreem Khan was desired by Ghuffoor Khan to take his departure, as the British army was advancing, and the proximity of the Pindarries would prevent Holkar from making peace. They marched towards Jawud, where their own quarrels, and the advance of British detachments, soon compelled them to separate. Kurreem, wearied out with fatigue, concealed himself in the town; while his camp, under Namdar Khan, went back from Mewar to Malwa, and, when near Gungraur, fell in with a British corps, by which it was so completely routed, that its leaders, despairing of all success, hastened to Bhopal, where they implored the Nabob to become their intercessor; and this early submission obtained not only a liberal provision for Namdar Khan, but secured to a great pro-

* Kurreem Khan's wife and part of his property were taken by Major-General Donkin's division.

portion of his followers the kind and humane consideration of the British government.

Kurreem's career now drew to its termination. He was concealed in one of the meanest houses in Jawud, when that place was taken by the British troops. He afterwards escaped, and wandered for some days on foot and alone in a mendicant's dress, in equal danger, according to his own representation, of perishing from fatigue and from hunger. Having at length communicated his situation to Ghuffoor Khan, he followed the advice given him by this Patan, and threw himself unconditionally* on the mercy of the British government, by which he was treated with consideration and liberality. He is now, with his numerous family, settled in the province of Goruckpoor, where lands have been allotted for his support, and where, could he forget the dreams of high fortune in which he once indulged, and learn wisdom from the strange vicissitudes he has endured, he might still be happy.

In this short sketch of the lives of their principal chiefs, we have all that can be desired of the history of the Pindarries, who, from their composition and habits, never could take substantive shape as a state or nation. They might, and did cause revolutions, but it was impossible for them to rise, upon such events, into permanent power.

* He came into my camp at Neembaherra.

They could not take root in the soil without losing their character; because every civil establishment, however rude, was opposed to their fundamental institutions, which were framed for a state of constant war against all government.

The Pindarries were principally dangerous from their existing among governments, none of which was powerful enough to subdue them, and their being themselves constitutionally incapable of settling into a community, possessing any interest in the general tranquillity; but this condition, while it made them formidable to weak and distracted states, rendered them incapable of resisting the resolute attack of a strong and vigorous government. Superficial observers thought it would be difficult, if not impossible, to destroy these freebooters. But it was evident that they could not exist without a home or without support. To drive them from the territories they possessed, to identify with them all who gave them aid or protection, was the only mode by which the great and increasing evil could be remedied. No measures were ever more wisely planned, more vigorously pursued, or more successfully accomplished, than those adopted for their suppression. There remains not a spot in India that a Pindarry can call his home. They have been hunted like wild beasts; numbers have been killed; all have been ruined. Those who adopted their cause have fallen. They were early

in the contest shunned like a contagion, and even the villagers whom they so recently oppressed, were among the foremost to attack them. Their principal leaders have either died, submitted, or been made captives; while their followers, with the exception of a few, whom the liberality and consideration of the British government have aided to become industrious, are lost in that population, from whose dregs they originally issued. A minute investigation only can discover these once formidable disturbers, concealed as they now are among the lowest classes, where they are making some amends for past atrocities, by the benefit which is derived from their labour in restoring trade and cultivation. These freebooters had none of the prejudices of caste, for they belonged to all tribes. They never had either the pride of soldiers, of family, or of country, so that they were bound by none of those ties which, among many of the communities in India, assume an almost indestructible character. Other plunderers may arise from distempered times; but, as a body, the Pindarries are so effectually destroyed, that their name is already almost forgotten, though not five years are passed since it spread terror and dismay over all India.

CHAPTER XI.

The Rajpoot Princes and Chiefs of Central India.

THE rise of the principal Rajpoot families in Central India has been already noticed; some of these have, since the Mahrattas invaded that region, acted no inconsiderable part; and, though they all agreed to pay tribute, many have preserved the independent government of their own lands; while others, though subdued, have gained celebrity by the courage and perseverance with which they defended their possessions against the usurpations of the invaders. An account of a family that has been completely ruined, and of one that has beyond all others prospered during the convulsions which have afflicted this part of India, with a few general remarks on the past and present condition of lesser chiefs, will be sufficient to illustrate the recent history of this class of petty rulers.

The origin of the Ragooghur chiefs has been already mentioned: the sequel of their history is remarkable, and exhibits in strong colours, both

the character of the Rajpoots and of their enemies the Mahrattas. The Chowan Rajpoots of Ragooghur have been always distinguished by the name of Kychee. They trace their descent from the first princes of the Rajpoot race; and, according to their Bhats, or traditionary bards, they possessed a principality in Central India before the Moghuls conquered that country; but of this there is no distinct record, though we find them at a remote date the possessors of Gagroon on the Kali Sind. Ghureeb Doss, a distinguished chief of this family, was an Omrah of some rank at the court of Akber; where his services gained him such favour with the Emperor, that, in addition to his former possession of Gagroon and other lands, he received a grant of the town and district of Seronge. This chief left three sons, of whom the first, Lal Singh*, succeeded: he founded Ragooghur, where, it is stated, he was honoured by a visit from Shah Jehan, by whom he was treated with singular favour and distinction.

Lal Singh died at the age of seventy, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Dhuruj Singh, who appears to have been very successful in all the petty wars which he waged with his neighbours. The reputation of this prince was high. The

* The descendants of this chief are called Lallawut; those of his brother Beja Singh, Bejawut; the third son of Ghureeb Doss died childless.

reigning Rajas of Jeypoor and Odeypoor both visited him, and each of them married one of his daughters. Dhuruj Singh was slain in an affray with the Ahcer tribe, whom he had been long engaged in reducing to order. His eldest son, Guj Singh, was expelled by his half-brother, Bickermajet *, who was supported by the Raja of Jeypoor, to whom his sister was married. The Rana of Odeypoor, who stood in the same relation to Guj Singh, armed to vindicate his right; but the death of this chief terminated the contest. His only son, Indur Singh, being unable to struggle against his uncle, remained inactive till the latter died, leaving the principality to his son, Bulbudder Singh; against whom a powerful combination was formed † by the neighbouring Hindu princes in favour of Indur Singh, who was, however, slain in one of the first actions that took place. About this period the Mahrattas invaded Central India. When the Paishwah Bajerow was at Sangur on his way to Hindustan, some difference arose between him and Bulbudder Singh; but the latter, who is noticed among the most powerful of the Rajpoot chiefs, appears ultimately to have succeeded in ingratiating himself with

* He is called in one of the genealogical accounts, Bicker Singh.

† There were no less than fourteen Rajas in the combination armed against Bulbudder Singh.

the invaders; and we find him, throughout his campaigns, one of the favourite friends and companions of Mulhar Row Holkar, after whose death he accompanied Junkojee Sindia to Marwar, and was with that leader when he was assassinated at Nagore. After this event, Bulbudder Singh returned to Ragooghur, where he died, in the sixtieth year of his age, leaving the principality to his son Bulwunt Singh, whose administration commenced and closed with a series of misfortunes. This prince had no sooner succeeded his father, than Madhajee Sindia demanded from him
A. D. 1780. the cession of particular districts, in compensation of tribute; and some years afterwards, on pretext of his having entered into negotiations with the British government, with which the Mahratta leader was then at war, he attacked the fort of Ragooghur, and, having captured it, and made the Raja and his young son, Jye Singh, prisoners, confiscated the property and territories of the family.

The Mahratta chief was not long left in quiet enjoyment of his triumph. Shere Singh, a Thakoor, or lord of the Kychee tribe, assembled the scattered adherents of Bulwunt Singh, and commenced a desperate and systematic course of predatory warfare, with the professed object of compelling Madhajee Sindia to release his prince. The first care of this bold and enterprising leader

was to prevent the country of Ragooghur from yielding one rupee of revenue to the Mahrattas. He warned the villager to leave his dwelling, and the husbandman to desist from tilling his fields, on pain of being pillaged. He ordered them to repair to neighbouring countries, and particularly to Bhopal; with Chutta Khan, the Dewan of which, he had established an understanding, which provided for their protection, and ensured an eventual refuge for himself and family. The friendship, or rather alliance, between these chiefs was well known to Madhajee Sindia, but it did not suit either his convenience or policy to resent it. This forbearance was not extraordinary. In governments like those of the Mahrattas, which have no permanent principles, but adopt, year after year, the expedients which seem best suited to the emergency of the moment, it is often deemed prudent to have channels through which they can conciliate, if it becomes necessary, the greatest offenders against the state. The purpose for which such connexions are maintained, was evinced on this occasion in a remarkable instance. Shere Singh kept himself distinct from the class of common plunderers. Ragooghur and its dependencies were, as before stated, laid waste, but Madhajee Sindia's other possessions were not invaded. The natives of Central India were comparatively treated with humanity, but no mercy was shewn to the

Mahrattas who fell into his hands. The Pundits or Brahmins of the Deckan were the chief objects of his vengeance. Their noses and ears were cut off, and their infants murdered, by this merciless chief, who answered to all remonstrances, that he would teach Madhajee Sindia what it was to destroy a Rajpoot principality. While the alarm of Shere Singh's cruelties was at its height, Madhajee's wife, with a number of the families of his principal officers, came from Poona to join him in Hindustan. They were guarded on the journey by four or five thousand men. Though the adherents of the Rajpoot leader did not amount to as many hundreds, the terror he had spread was so great, that the convoy hesitated to advance. They knew that Shere Singh would hazard every thing to glut his vengeance on the families of Sindia and his principal ministers; they therefore solicited the protection of the Dewan of Bhopal, who rejoiced in the opportunity of shewing his regard for the Mahratta prince, and not only appointed a party to accompany the Bhye (or princess), but requested Shere Singh not to offer any insult or injury to her retinue. His wish was complied with; and the lady, when she reached Muttra, was warm in her praises of Chutta Khan, to whom Madhajee Sindia wrote a letter* of grateful acknowledgment.

* The complimentary part of this letter termed the Dewan

While Bulwunt Singh was kept prisoner in Hindustan, his son Jye Singh, a youth of twenty years of age, was closely confined at Bhilsa. The most anxious efforts of Shere Singh had long been directed to effect his release; and he at last succeeded, through the means of corruption and the adventurous enterprise of some trained thieves*, by whose aid the prince was enabled to escape over the walls of the fort. He was immediately mounted, and carried to a place of safety, from whence Shere Singh sent him to Jeypoor, that he might interest the Raja of that principality, and of Joudpoor, in favour of his father. Jye Singh was successful in persuading both these princes to adopt his cause; and their representations to Madhajee Sindia not only obtained the release of the Raja, but the restoration of Ragooghur, to which, however, a stipulation for the payment of a large sum was annexed. Ambajee Inglia, then one of Sindia's principal leaders, became responsible for Bulwunt Singh's performing his engagement. But the apparent friendship of this wily Mahratta had no object

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his son, and gave him high titles. The vanity of Chutta Khan was much flattered by this mark of attention from Madhajee Sindia.

* The thieves were of a tribe called Bagrees: one of these leaped the wall with the Raja on his shoulders, and escaped unhurt.

but his own benefit; for he sent his brother* with the unfortunate Raja, who, restored to a country without revenue, was soon compelled, by his inability to fulfil his obligations, to leave it to be again usurped, and to retire to the Jeypoor territories, where he died three years afterwards. Bulwunt Singh was devoid of energy, and quite unsuited to the troubled times in which he lived. His memory is, in consequence, held in no estimation by the gallant tribe, of which he was so long the nominal head.

Bulwunt Singh, when forced to leave Ragooghur, had written to his relation Doorjun Lal, whom he had left as his agent at the court of Sindia, to quit it, as he found the whole proceedings of the Mahrattas full of deceit and treachery, and had himself resolved to place no farther confidence in them. Doorjun Lal, on receiving this intimation, hastened to Kycheewarra†, where he collected a number of followers, and commenced depredations upon the Mahratta territories. After he had pursued this course about two years, he was compelled to fly; but the numerous and strong detachments‡ which were sent against him by Mad-

* Balaram Inglia.

† Kycheewarra is the name by which the country inhabited by the Kychee Rajpoots is now, and has for several centuries been known.

‡ The corps of Balaram Inglia, Jewa Dada, and Gopal Bhow, were employed against him.

hajee Sindia prove, that even at this early part of his career Doorjun Lal was considered as no contemptible insurgent. This chief, when forced to abandon Kycheewarra, only retired to Sangur, from the manager of which he found shelter till the death of Madhajee Sindia seemed to present A. D. 1798. the opportunity he had so long desired of avenging the wrongs of his family. He was joined by the young prince Jye Singh, who had assumed the title of Raja; and the two chiefs, being invited to adopt the cause of Madhajee Sindia's widow, united their force with that of Luckwa Dada, the commander of her army. Their friendship and support were purchased by the restoration of Ragooghur to Jye Singh, and the grant of a large Jaghire* to Doorjun Lal. But all hopes of success from this connexion were completely destroyed by an action with the disciplined battalions of Dowlet Row Sindia, under the command of his French general Perron. The latter was completely victorious. The troops of Luckwa Dada fled and dispersed in every direction; and Doorjun Lal and Jye Singh were again reduced to depend upon their own efforts. These were at first directed against the Hindu tribe of Aheerwarra, whose chief† being slain, his capital, then called Oondee, fell into the possession of Door-

* Seronge, Jadhooree, and Ranoude.

† Deleep Singh.

jun Lal, who, selecting it for his own, changed the name to Bahadurghur, and endeavoured by every expedient to increase its strength and population. This was but a first step of the able and ambitious Rajpoot, who appears to have entertained views of establishing a principality distinct from that of the family to which he professed allegiance. It is also probable that he was disgusted with the moody violence of Jye Singh, which had broken out on several occasions. Whatever was the cause, their interests were separated; and, while the Raja retired to Ragooghur, Doorjun Lal took advantage of the weakness of the petty Hindu chiefs in the Eastern parts of Central In-
A. D. 1801. dia, and of the contests in which the Mahratta states were involved in the Deckan, and subse-
A. D. 1803. quently with the British, to increase his army, and extend his territory, which at one period comprised the sovereignty of no less than twenty-two districts*: which he enjoyed for several years, till a formidable detachment, under the orders of Dowlet Row Sindia's principal European commander Baptiste†, succeeded in wresting from him, one by one, all his possessions. His new capital, Baliadurghur, which shared the fate of the rest, was

* Bahadurghur, Ranoude, Pucher, and Gondah, were the principal.

† This commander is always termed European, though born in India, and his mother a native of India.

doomed once more to change its name; and received from its Christian conqueror, that by which it is now distinguished, Yesughur, or the fort of Jesus. Though he lost his territories, the spirit of Doorjun Lal was still unconquered. He kept around him a considerable body of the kindred bands of the Kycheewarra Rajpoots, and some other faithful adherents; with whom he made constant attacks on the country of Dowlet Row Sindia, and once at Narwar carried off a number of cattle from that prince's camp. The object of his last efforts was to compel Sindia to come to some arrangement with him, that would enable him to support his family and followers; and in this he probably would have succeeded, had he not died*. Few of his tribe have left a higher reputation for wisdom, courage, or enterprise. He was for many years the terror of the Mahrattas, against whom he cherished the most rooted hatred and hostility. A.D. 1810.

Doorjun Lal having left no children; his relation Byroo Lal was elected his successor, and the depredations he continued so far prospered, as to obtain him the grant of a district† for his sub-

* He died at Bheernawud, in the forty-eighth year of his age.

† Byroo Lal is a younger son of Goolab Singh, a relation of Doorjun Lal. He assumes the title of Raja Bahadur, on the ground of its having been conferred on Doorjun Lal by the Rana of Odeypoor.

sistence, yielding one lack of rupees, which he still enjoys.

The fortunes of Doorjun Lal for a period predominated over those of the princes to whom he was related, and to whom he professed allegiance: for though he endeavoured to establish his own independence, he never ceased to acknowledge them as his hereditary superiors. The zeal and attachment which he had evinced to Bulwunt Singh was, upon the death of that chief, transferred to his son, Jye Singh, who, when his father died, was in the Jeypoor territories*, with the prince of which, as well as those of Odeypoor and Jeypoor, he was intimately connected. After he had received presents and congratulations from these Rajpoot princes on his succession, he attended, as has been related, to the summons of Doorjun Lal, to aid in the war against the enemies of his family.

Jye Singh, then twenty-eight years of age†, was according to the Hindu MSS. from which this account is extracted, a prince of great promise. His mother, the favourite wife of Bulwunt Singh, is said to have been so beautiful, that she fell a victim to the jealousy of the other Ranies, who practised every art of Asiatic sorcery for her

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* He was at Madooghur.

† He succeeded to the title of Raja of Ragooghur, in the Hindu month of Koomar, in the year of the Sumbhut 1855, or A.D. 1798.

destruction. Their malignity is described as having given Bulwunt Singh an uncommon interest in his son, whom he took, according to the historian of his family, every pains to instruct both as a scholar and a soldier. We have no evidence of the progress made by the young prince in learning, but he early shewed that in personal heroism he was excelled by none; and even before the death of Doorjun Lal, with whom his first efforts were associated, Jye Singh had established a name for courage and enterprise that rendered him formidable to the Mahrattas. But the admiration which his followers granted to his valour must have been mixed with fear and horror at his violence, of which he gave some terrible proofs. The most remarkable may be selected as an example: a short period before the death of Doorjun Lal, Jye Singh, having through his own rashness been defeated by one of Sindia's officers, fled wounded to Boojrunghur, where he confined himself so closely that a rumour of his death was spread, and believed by his nearest relations and most confidential officers; some of whom, as was to be expected, began to intrigue and cabal for the succession to his power. The Raja is said to have encouraged the report of his death, that he might discover the real dispositions of those around him; but, when recovered from his illness, he appeared quite unconcerned at what had passed, and assumed a serenity and gaiety that lulled all into secu-

rity. After the lapse of some months, however, he took advantage of a season of festivity, not only to seize and put to death his kinsmen Lutchmun Singh and Aman Singh, the persons he chiefly suspected, but with the most wanton barbarity he ordered their families, without distinction of age or sex, to be sacrificed to his resentment. The mode in which these murders were perpetrated is quite shocking to every feeling of humanity. The only exculpation* that can be framed for these and similar atrocities is the belief that he was at this period insane; and the evidence of those who were in the habits of seeing him†, even before he exercised power, sufficiently proves the fact. The misfortunes of his family, and an ardent desire of revenge, are stated, in one account of his life, to have had such an effect upon his mind, that he early devoted himself to the adoration of Hunoomaun, and sought, through penances and incantations, an interview with the warrior Demigod‡, which he was deceived by an old priest

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* Jye Singh put several of his own wives to death.

† Khealee Ram was sometimes in Doorjun Lal's camp. He often saw Jye Singh, and says, that he appeared to him, from his acts and conversation, to be a person not merely of an ungovernable temper, but of unsettled reason.

‡ Hunoomaun is represented as a monkey. His wonderful exploits are celebrated in the Hindu mythological fable of Rama's attack of Rawun, the monarch of Ceylon, who had carried off his wife Seeta.

into a belief that he had obtained. It was, according to some statements, on this occasion, that his reason first became unsettled; and it is highly probable that the constant practice of these superstitious rites, combined with the use of opium and other intoxicating drugs, acting upon an ardent and impatient temper, rendered him at times deranged. His appearance and language indicated frequent intoxication; but his natural courage, which was great, was increased by this state of continual excitement; and as his mind was chiefly inflamed with one object, that of determined hostility to the Mahrattas, his Rajpoot followers were disposed to deem his madness inspiration, and they readily pardoned the crimes of a chief, who, they persuaded themselves, was born to be the scourge of their cruel and oppressive enemies. We can on no other ground account for their suffering an intemperate tyrant to commit the numerous murders he did, after he had lost all his possessions, and had no authority left, but what he derived from their continued attachment.

The policy of Dowlet Row Sindia, when he made peace with the British government, was directed to the complete subjection, or rather annihilation, of some of his Rajpoot tributaries in Central India, whose lands he desired to incorporate with those of the state. Baptiste, with his corps of infantry and artillery, was employed on this service; and having reduced the neighbouring A.D. 1803.

principality of Seopoor, the report of Jye Singh's excesses led him to hope the possessions of that chief would be an easy conquest. The festival of the Hooly, when the Raja and his adherents were known to give way to the greatest indulgence in liquor, was the moment chosen for attack. Boojrunghur was taken, and Ragooghur invested, but the latter did not fall till some time afterwards, and during its siege every effort was made by Jye Singh himself to distress an enemy whom he had no force to meet in the open field. Among his other exploits, he completely succeeded in a well-planned enterprise against Seopoor, which he retook *, and not only obtained considera-

* Seopoor was taken on the 3d of June, 1816. The mode in which it was taken, is described by Captain Close as follows:

"Jye Singh approached the fort early in the morning, having, as was believed, an understanding with some of the people within. He applied scaling-ladders to the walls, and mounted in person, with sixty of his men, at a place which led immediately to the citadel, where Baptiste's family resided. There was here a guard of only twenty men, with five half-caste Europeans. The Raja, half-naked, was armed with a spear, and the rest of his party with swords and shields. They overpowered the guard, among whom two of the Europeans were killed, but the Raja also lost ten or twelve men of his own in the struggle. Written orders from Baptiste's son and wife were then sent down to the garrison, consisting of about two hundred irregulars, desiring them to remain quiet, as it would cost them their lives if any resistance was made; accordingly no opposition was offered."—Vide Captain Close's Letter to Government.

ble treasure, but made Baptiste's family prisoners. He afterwards released the wife of that leader; and this act of consideration was returned by his princesses being allowed to join him when Ragooghur fell. A settlement was more than once proposed by Sindia's commander to the Rajpoot chief: but the objects of the parties were irreconcileable. The consequence was, the contest was continued with redoubled animosity, and the Mahratta troops being numerous, the districts of Ragooghur were completely occupied by them. Jye Singh, when expelled from his own country, found subsistence for himself and adherents by invading Sindia's unprotected possessions: but even in this extremity of his fortune he preserved the character of a prince. He levied contributions only from the officers of government, and refrained from plundering individuals. His range was at one period very extended, having gone as far West as A. D. 1816. the districts of Nolye and Katchrode, and as far South as Kundwah and Boorhanpoor. His force was entirely composed of horse, and amounted to about five thousand men, many of whom were Rajpoots of his own tribe. His enterprises were not alone directed against the wealth of the country; the predatory war maintained for several years against Sindia's commander Baptiste, was prosecuted with an activity and spirit that often reduced that leader, in spite of his superior

means, to great distress: at one period a corps*, consisting of two battalions and a number of guns, was completely defeated, and Jye Singh, who had led his own followers to the charge on this memorable occasion, seemed on the point of recovering his possessions, when his enemies collected in such force that he was again compelled to retire. But, though exposed to continual reverses, his spirit was unbroken, and he had infused the same courage into his kindred tribe. The undaunted valour and personal prowess of their prince was the theme of all their Charuns and Bhats (genealogists and minstrels); and an expelled chief, whose country did not produce an annual revenue of three lacks of rupees, occupied for five years a large part of Sindia's force. Nor is it probable, had the British armies not advanced into Central India, that the Mahratta troops, numerous† as they were, would have proved equal to his reduction, as his followers increased rather than diminished. These, however, were of different classes; he was personally surrounded by between four and five hundred of his immediate relations and family adhe-

* This corps was commanded by an Armenian officer named Aratoon, from whose account, as transmitted to Gualior, the action was not so decided.

† There were with Jean Baptiste, acting against Jye Singh, five battalions, with between thirty and forty guns, and from eight to ten thousand horse, including a number of Pindarries.

rents, who were all well mounted, and so devoted to their leader and his cause, that hardly any superiority of numbers would induce the Mahratta horse to stand the assault of his band. The remainder of his force was made up of hired soldiers; and he was able, from the funds obtained at the commencement of the contest, and the contributions he levied during its continuance, to pay them with tolerable regularity. The condition of Central India was favourable to Jye Singh, but his hostility was solely directed against the territories of Dowlet Row Sindia; no other country was attacked, no travellers or merchants plundered, nor was he, except in action, either cruel or vindictive. The scenes of constant activity and enterprise in which he became engaged, are stated to have effected a favourable change in his character. He was, when the English columns reached the Nerbudda, the theme of every tongue, and held forth as an example of a gallant prince struggling to the last against his oppressors. He appears to have long looked forward with anxious hope to the occurrence of war between Sindia and the British government; and his ardent mind anticipated the restoration, under the auspices of the latter, of his own fortunes, with those of the other Rajpoot chiefs who had been subdued by the Mahrattas. The letter which he addressed to an officer* in command of a corps on

* Colonel Mac Morine.

the frontier, is a proof of the exaggerated expectations in which he indulged from the events that he saw approaching. After some remarks on the different Rajpoot tribes, and an assertion that the Kychee Chouans, of which he is the head, have the true right to the title of Hinduput, and the sovereignty* which that implies, Jye Singh observes, "As the Maharaja Sindia has desolated "my country, and deprived me of my honour, "besides having carried off property to the amount "of some crores of rupees, it is my earnest wish "to destroy his power. I therefore hope that the "English government will enable me to demand "retribution from my enemy. If the country of "Sindia is made over to me, I will agree to pay "six or eight annas in the rupee on all the "collections.

"The English troops and my horsemen, where-"ever they go, will, from the good fortune of the "English, be victorious, and Sindia shall be de-"stroyed." After some farther remarks on the former power of the Rajpoots, he concludes by saying, "I am well informed that you, English, "intend to destroy the Pindarries: let me have "orders on this subject, and if any chief harbours "these plunderers in his country, or joins with "them, I shall not fail to give information of it.

* That is, to be kings of India. He gives the Sesodians of Odeypoor only the second rank as Rajpoot princes.

"The Pindarries have thirty thousand good "horsemen; this is not hid from you: if the "English government will advance me funds to "maintain fifteen thousand horse, or five lacks of "rupees, I will destroy these Pindarries.

"Wherever I may suggest that battalions "should be sent, let them be sent: and where "regiments (meaning cavalry) are required, let "regiments be sent; at all events, until an answer "can be given to this letter, let me have an "advance of twenty-five thousand rupees, and "wherever I am ordered, there shall I encamp; "but if cash cannot be immediately given, let a "Vakeel or agent of mine be allowed to remain "with you for the adjustment of this point, and "let me know to what place I am to repair to "await your decision. But, above all things, let "the negotiation be made binding; it will re-"dound to the fame and glory of the Com-"pany."

Had Dowlet Row Sindia not preserved neutrality, Jye Singh would have been an apt and popular instrument for his reduction; as it was, no support could be given to the cause of this prince, who was preparing the means of renewing the contest, when he fell a sacrifice to the prevailing epidemic*, and left his title and claims to be disputed by two candidates, Dhokul Singh and

* Cholera Morbus.

A.D. 1818. Adjeet Singh, who, by dividing his adherents, broke the union and strength of the Kychees, and gave to Sindia's government a comparatively easy triumph over that gallant tribe.

The first in rank among the princesses of a Hindu ruler or chief who has no issue, becomes on his death a personage of great consequence in the state, from her acknowledged right of adoption, and the claims upon the power and property of her husband which this choice confers. It is generally conceived a duty to choose from the least objectionable among the near relations of the deceased; but the obligation is not imperative, and the consequences of the exercise of this right too often produce family feuds and disputed successions. In the present instance, one of the chief Ranies, or princesses, of Jye Singh, after consultation with some of the principal officers, chose the son of Goolab Singh*, who was declared, by her and her party, raised to the Gaddee, or seat of power, under the name of Adjeet Singh. The aunt of Jye Singh, a widow lady of much consideration, opposed this act, and proclaimed herself in favour of Dhokul Singh†, a leader of repu-

* The name of this youth was Buchtawur Singh; but on his adoption by the Rany he was called Adjeet Singh.

† Dhokul Singh grounds his claim chiefly on having received the horse and spear of Jye Singh before the death of that chief, and having been by him appointed his successor. The question was long under discussion, and was referred to

tation for his gallantry, but against whom there was, with many of the Rajpoots of Kycheewarra, the insurerable objection of his being of the Bijawut, or younger branch of the family, whose descendants have always been deemed subordinate to the Lalawut*, or elder branch.

When it is considered that all the territories of Ragooghur had been usurped by Sindia, and that it was merely for a name that the parties were contending, this disputed succession, which was as warm as if the contest had been for an empire, may excite a smile. It may be deemed a quarrel for a shadow; but such was not the case. It was a dispute for the allegiance and devoted attachment of three or four thousand as brave and hardy soldiers as any in India. These were now divided, and the early submission of one chief, Adjeet Singh, on terms mediated† by the British government, attached some of them to the cause of order; but Dhokul Singh continued his opposition, till his adherents, after several defeats from a contingent of Sindia's acting under the command of British officers, almost all

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the decision of the Rajas of Odeypoor, Jeypoor, Boondee, Kotah, Seopoor, and Narwar.

* The names of Lalawut and Bijawut, into which the Ragooghur family are divided, take, as has been stated, their origin from Lal Singh and Beejy Singh, the two sons of Ghureeb Doss, the founder of the principality enjoyed by this race of chiefs in Malwa.

deserted him: he was recently made prisoner and sent to Gualior. The testimony given by the officers employed on this service to the courage and enterprise of the Rajpoots of Kycheewarra gives reason to conclude, that, had not the British government interposed its mediation and aid, it might have been long before this gallant tribe would have been completely subdued. The character of their last chief, and of the feelings he entertained, in common with all his race, towards the Mahrattas, is well expressed in a letter from the British Resident at the Court of Gualior*. "Dhokul Singh," he observes, "is a man of "the most daring courage, which is evinced by "the numerous marks he bears of the wounds "he has received in action. It is to be re-"gretted that his character is so deeply stained "with deeds of cruelty. He had been allowed, "while in confinement at this Residency, to re-"tain his sword and shield, and would have also "been permitted to wear them in the fort of Gua-"lior; but, when he was about to be delivered "over to the Mahrattas, he sent them to me "with a message, stating that he would never "have surrendered them to a Mahratta but with "his life, and that his only hope of ever taking

* Vide paragraph 14. Dispatch from Captain Stewart to the Political Secretary to Government, 20th January, 1821.

"them up again rested on the favour of the Bri-
"tish government."

The fort and town of Ragooghur, with an estate of fifty-five thousand rupees, have been restored to the families, with an engagement that a few of the adherents are to be always in Sindia's service. These terms were with difficulty obtained through the mediation of the British government.

The Raj, or principality of Kotah, which forms in its later history a complete contrast to that of Ragooghur, originated in one of the Ranas of Odeypoor having, in consequence of a long-cherished feud with the chiefs of Boondee, adopted the cause of a younger brother of the reigning prince, whom he settled first in Kotah as a Jaghiredar, and afterwards so effectually aided in a war against his superior, that the latter was compelled to purchase peace by the cession of half his territories to form the principality* of Kotah, the ruler of which assumed the title of Maha Row, or the great chief.

It is nearly two centuries since this event occurred. The first prince of Kotah was Bishen Singh, whose family continued to enjoy the reality as well as the name of the power, till the elevation of the late Maha Row Omeid Singh. This

* I find some variation from this account in other MSS. but the difference does not merit notice.

prince, either from taking alarm at the state of confusion into which the whole of Central India had been thrown, or his own inefficiency, had so entirely lost all authority over his principal chiefs and subjects, that he was unable to pay seventy-five thousand rupees per annum, which had been fixed as the Mahratta tribute. Kotah seemed on the verge of destruction, when it was not only saved, but raised to the first rank among the Rajpoot principalities, by one of the most remarkable men who has appeared in the modern history of India.

Zalim Singh, of the Hara tribe of Chouan Rajpoots*, was son of Perthi Raj, an officer of rank in the service of Goonan Singh, Raja of Kotah. The father must have been in high estimation, as we find not only one of his daughters married to his prince, but the son, at the age of twenty, commanding a force against the troops of the Raja of Jeypoor, whom, with the aid of Mulhar Row Holkar, he defeated. Some time after this event, a misunderstanding between Goonan Singh and his young leader induced the latter to go to the court of Odeypoor, the ruler of which employed him against the Mahrattas with such success, that they were driven from Mewar; but in a subse-

* The tribe of Hara have produced many celebrated men. Ram Singh Hara, who was an Omrah of high rank, and a commander of nine thousand horse, was esteemed one of Aurungzebe's best Generals.

quent action fought near Oojein, Zalim Singh not only experienced a reverse, but fell a wounded prisoner into the hands of his enemies. He was at this period a chief of reputation. The prince of Odeypoor had bestowed upon him a Jaghire, and had added to the title of Raja, to which he had a hereditary right, the appellation of Rana. He had been before invited by his nephew, Oneid Singh, Raja of Kotah, to take upon himself, as Minister, the settlement of that principality; and he now contemplated this proposition as a means of restoring his fallen fortune. During his confinement he became acquainted with several of Sindia's officers, but particularly with a Brahmin of the name of Lallajee Bellal, who had the charge of the collection of the tributes of the Rajpoot princes. Zalim Singh made a proposal, that he should be sent to Kotah, supported by Sindia's authority, by the aid of which and his own efforts he not only expected to reduce the rebellious lords of that principality to obedience, but to restore the country to a state of prosperity that would enable it to pay its tribute regularly;—and as a farther inducement to incline the Mahratta prince to adopt this measure, an increase of twenty-five thousand rupees was offered to be made in the annual amount. This proposition was accepted; and Zalim Singh, accompanied by his friend Lallajee Bellal, and a small party of Sindia's Pagah, or household troops, went to Kotah, where

his arrival was welcomed by Oneid Singh, who immediately appointed him his minister, and voluntarily resigned into his hands the exclusive administration of affairs. The impression made by this act, combined with the energetic character of Zalim Singh, and the decided support of the Mahrattas, prevented any formidable opposition to the establishment of his authority; and in the progress of the contests in which he became engaged with the refractory Thakoors, or Barons of Kotah, he exhibited a severity which struck terror into his enemies. Averse to war, he appears early to have commenced that system by which he has in the course of forty-five years raised a principality, whose revenue, when he was appointed minister, or rather regent, was not more than four lacks of rupees, to forty lacks. Amidst scenes of plunder, confusion, and anarchy, when violence, weakness, rapacity, and ambition, led alike to ruin, the calm temper, the clear mind, the profound art, and the firm energy of Zalim Singh took advantage of the errors of all around, without ever committing one himself. He early shewed that, at a period when none were trusted, he might be confided in. His character for courage and wisdom was soon so well established, that it was deemed dangerous to have him as an enemy; and so far was he from offering provocation, that, instead of assuming the high tone of a Rajpoot chief, he readily acknowledged the para-

mount authority of the Mahrattas, terming himself a Zemindar, or landholder, and cultivator. He was, in fact, too well satisfied with the substance of power to quarrel about its shadow. Bred to business, he was at once the farmer, the merchant, and the minister. In every transaction his tone was that of fairness and moderation; and though he, no doubt, from the first, cherished objects of the greatest ambition, these were never paraded, nor did good fortune (and the lives of few men offer a parallel of success so complete and uninterrupted) ever alter, or in the least disturb, his equal course. He appears, within a very short period of his first advancement to power, to have enjoyed the same character he does at this moment; and while his territories were kept in the highest state of cultivation, the additions made to them were obtained more by art, intrigue, and accident, than by force. But the greatest increase of revenue arose from the confiscation and improvement of the large and ill-managed estates of the nobles of the principality, which were chiefly usurpations upon the weakness of former princes. To enable him to give full effect to these changes in the internal administration of the country, Zalim Singh was most sedulous in establishing and maintaining links of amicable connexion with every foreign prince and chief, from the principal monarchs of India to the most desperate freebooters. In a sea of trouble the territories of Kotah became

a harbour where there was comparative repose; and the convenience which all found in having occasional resort to this asylum, created a general interest in its continued security. The policy of Zalim Singh led him to purchase at any price, except a violation of his faith, the friendship and protection of the prevailing power of the moment; which gave him confidence to pursue his views of aggrandisement at leisure. His object was never lost through hurry to obtain it. All means, except such as might compromise a reputation which was his strength, were employed to effect his purposes: neighbouring districts were rented, fugitives received, treasure taken in deposit, powerful leaders conciliated, those in distress relieved, and every act had, both in substance and manner, a discrimination as to time and the temper of the parties concerned, which gave to this extraordinary man all the chances of the troubled times, with few, if any, of the hazards. But against the latter he took care to be well provided: he formed at an early period a small but efficient body of troops, which were gradually augmented in numbers with his increasing resources, and were always, from their formation, equipment, good pay, and the high character of their selected commanders, among the very best of their class.

To detail minutely all the steps by which Zalim Singh has raised Kotah to its present condition, would be tedious. His character, talents, and the

means he used, have therefore been thus generally described; a short account of his progress to the great power and influence he has obtained will suffice.

The town of Kotah, and its original lands, are chiefly situated in Harrowtee *, one of the largest provinces in the Soubah of Ajmeer; but the possessions of this Raj, or principality, have gradually extended over other parts of Central India. Among the first possessions which Zalim Singh obtained, were the fort and lands of Shahabad: the garrison of which, being seduced by him from their duty, put their governor to death. The relations of the latter hastened with their complaints of this violence to Madhajee Sindia; but with him Zalim Singh had a powerful mediator in his friend Lallajee Bellal, and the payment of a sum of money, with the promise of a regular tribute for Shahabad, not only obtained pardon for the act, but a grant from the nominal Emperor of Delhi, vesting the government of that place in the prince of Kotah, in whose name Zalim Singh always acted.

Hardly a year passed after the accession of Zalim Singh to full power, in which he did not add to his territories by obtaining grants or leases of dis-

* This province, which adjoins Malwa, is stated by some to have received its name from the tribe of Haru. This, however, appears a doubtful etymology.

tricts or villages, or by giving protection to small Kotrees, or estates of Rajpoot lords, who repaid him with their service and attachment. The fall of the Rajas of Narwar, and neighbouring petty states, and the decrease of the influence and power of the Puar family of the Mahrattas, were alike turned to his benefit. But the greatest advance of his fortune may perhaps be attributed to Ambajee Inglia. This powerful and wealthy leader, who had been held in high estimation by Madhajee Sindia, when nominated by his successor Soubahdar of Gualior, contracted the most intimate ties with Zalim Singh; and while he made Kotah the residence of his family and depôt of his treasures, he took every opportunity of favouring and adding to the strength of its ruler. The same description of connexion, established* with Ambajee, was cultivated with the other high officers of Dowlet Row Sindia, who governed countries or commanded armies in his vicinity. His friendship indeed was the first object of all these, as it gave them a respected asylum for themselves or families in the hour of trouble; and the care Zalim Singh took to keep well with the principal ministers of Sindia, whose necessities he occasionally relieved,

* Zalim Singh was, in the latter years of Ambajee's life, the only person he trusted; and it is generally believed that a considerable part of the wealth which he had accumulated was deposited at Kotah, and became, on his death, the property of the regent.

made him certain that no casual or temporary protection he might give to offenders, or public defaulters, would be seriously resented. The fact is, for reasons that have before been stated, nothing could be more useful or desirable to a government like Sindia's, than to have those half-dependent leaders of its armies and managers of its provinces, with whose services it could not dispense, but whose power it could not always controul, look to such protection as that afforded by the regent of Kotah, who, though firm in maintaining the pledges he gave, was not only moderate and conciliating, but leant always to the superior power. His wealth (and he early became rich) made him a convenient medium; for in all settlements between Mahratta states and their offending servants a fine is the first object. The security of Zalim Singh, if he did not advance the money, was so good, that no banker hesitated a moment in accepting it; and we find him extending this aid, not merely to high officers of state, but, as in the case of Kurreem Khan, already mentioned, to the most lawless characters. From all these settlements he must have derived great profit, for the parties in whose favour he interposed had commenced with giving him the pledge of their wealth and family, and placing themselves, in fact, completely in his power. The most alarming event which ever threatened his deep-laid schemes of policy, was the rise of Jeswunt Row Holkar, a prince

unrestrained by any common obligations, and to whose violence and rapacity the prosperity of Kotah offered a tempting point of attack. The mode in which this danger was evaded for a course of years, exhibits a remarkable illustration of the ability of Zalim Singh. The principality he governed had at one time paid tribute to each of the three great Mahratta families, Sindia, the Puar, and Holkar; but it was the policy of all Rajpoot princes, to give no tribute unless to those who could enforce the right. The condition of the Holkar government after the death of Alia Bhye had deprived it of the power to enforce its claims; and a large arrear was due. This was demanded by Jeswunt Row, and paid; but farther exactions were dreaded. To evade these, Zalim Singh established the most intimate friendship with Ameer Khan; and when that chief selected Sheerghur, one of the forts of the principality of Kotah, as a place of security for his family and property, he gave a complete pledge that his whole influence, then great among the plunderers of India, would at all times be exerted to save that country from their depredations. This connexion may, in a great degree, [illegible] the profound tranquillity that state [illegible] ing the very worst times with which [illegible] dia has been afflicted.

While Zalim Singh, by that singular [illegible] art, pliancy, firmness, and wisdom, [illegible]

described, not only continued to preserve himself, but also to increase his territories amid the wars and revolutions of Central India, his ambition led him to interfere with the politics of the Rana of Odeypoor. It is not meant to enter on the details of the intrigues and operations this interposition occasioned. These, after occupying him for thirty-five years, have terminated in a manner that has neither added to the advancement of his interests, nor his reputation. We may believe that the motives which originally led Zalim Singh to meddle with the affairs of this celebrated but decayed principality, were worthy of his name; but, disappointed, in the first instance, in his higher and juster views by the weak character of the Rana, as well as by the feuds and vices of the nobles, and, next, foiled in his intrigues by the baser art and greater rapacity of the Mahrattas, his measures degenerated into those of a mean and selfish policy. Latterly, to accomplish a marriage between the Rana and the daughter of the Maha Row of Kotah (which was a great honour for the latter), he made a show of retribution to this unfortunate State by splendid promises of rich presents, and renewed efforts to relieve the country from the intolerable miseries still inflicted by the Mahratta leaders; but the expectations he excited on this occasion were poorly fulfilled; and he brought forward accounts

and claims against the Rana, swelled by items*, to the amount of twenty-nine lacks of rupees, that would have disgraced the character of the most sordid Hindu banker. The liberal policy, however, of the British government, which sought to conciliate all parties, prevented the farther discussion of this question. Several districts† in Odeypoor, of which Zalim Singh had possession, were restored to the Rana; whilst the tribute of Shahabad, and some other rights, were ceded in perpetuity to Zalim Singh, as a compensation for what he had lost by this arrangement.

By the treaty concluded at Delhi, Zalim Singh was exempted from all farther tribute‡ to the Mahrattas; but he agreed to pay an equal amount to the British government. This was a mode of settlement he had long wished for; and though his wary policy had excited some doubts of his sin-

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* The Rana, besides being loaded with numerous petty charges for clothes and other articles at advanced prices, with high compound interest upon bonds granted by ministers whose acts he had disowned, was charged nearly nineteen lacks of rupees due for expenditure beyond receipts on the districts of Jehazpoor and Sauganeer, the possessions which Zalim Singh had wrested from him.

† Jehazpoor and Sauganeer.

‡ The tribute formerly paid to th[illegible] us. We account to Sindia for his [illegible] tribute to the Paishwah we gain, [illegible] pays for our protection. That [illegible] troops, at our requisition, according [illegible]

cerity* during the contest in which the British were engaged sixteen years ago with Dowlet Row Sindia and Jeswunt Row Holkar, the result proved that he had not acted unwisely: for when he perceived that the British government had at last decided on the course it meant to pursue, and had resolved to assume that paramount authority among the states of India which belonged to the magnitude of its power, Zalim Singh did not then hesitate regarding the part he was to act. He at once rejected all his former connexions, and attached himself exclusively to that state, to which,

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* Zalim Singh's sincerity was doubted by Colonel Monson, who, when he reached Kotah in his flight before Holka, desired more from this chief than he could have been expected to grant. But there are two occurrences of that period which should be mentioned, as illustrative of Zalim Singh's sense of honour and his habitual caution. When Holkar reached Kotah, where he halted some days, he learnt that there were two of Colonel Monson's guns in the place, and demanded them. The Rana, though he paid a considerable contribution without much difficulty, yet resisted the demand for the guns with the greatest pertinacity: nor would he give them up till Holkar actually invested the place, and obliged him to comply. He is said to have been so much distressed by this occurrence, that he ate no food that day. While Holkar remained at Kotah, the [illegible] but after he had crossed the Chum[illegible]g of a singular kind was agreed on: [illegible] few armed men, and the Rana in [illegible]mber, pushed off at the same moment [illegible]ey met in the middle of the stream, [illegible]few minutes, returned.

as an instrument for the restoration of peace and good order, he became the most important of allies. The promptitude and energy with which he entered into the war against the Pindarries and Holkar, were early rewarded by the cession of four fine districts*, valued at four lacks of rupees, and rendered more desirable to him from their contiguity to his territories. Zalim Singh has lost no subsequent opportunity of evincing the sincerity of his friendship to the British government. In every effort to establish order in countries adjoining the territories of Kotah, great benefit has always been derived from his aid. In the settlement of Sondwarra, one of the most turbulent districts in Malwa, his troops, which co-operated with those of the British, acted with a forwardness that proved at once the disposition of their prince, and their own gallantry. The siege and storm of Narella was an achievement which reflected the highest credit upon their zeal and efficiency.

The death of Omeid Singh, the Maha Row of Kotah, which occurred a short time ago, has been seriously felt by Zalim Singh; and it was certainly, next to the death of the latter, the event most likely to disturb the tranquillity of that state. The late Maha Row and the Raj Rana had for nearly half a century maintained their mutual relations

* Gungraur, Dug, Putchpahar, and Gurrote.

with the most perfect concord. The former, devoted to his religious duties, appears neither to have had the desire nor the ability to manage the affairs of his principality; and while he devolved every thing upon his uncle, the Raj Rana, the latter, pleased with the substance of power, studiously gave all its exterior to his nominal prince, whom he treated on every occasion with habitual regard and respect. A natural desire, however, to perpetuate the influence of his family, made Zalim Singh stipulate, when he formed an alliance with the British government, that it should maintain his descendants as ministers, or, in other words, as Regents of Kotah. This engagement, from the actual condition of the parties, has already produced great embarrassment; which may be expected to increase on the death of Zalim Singh, already above eighty years of age, blind and paralytic, and to all appearance on the very verge of dissolution. A few months will probably terminate his long, laborious, and eventful life. This incident, whenever it does occur, will be a serious misfortune to his country and to Central India; for his influence and example confer benefit beyond the limits of his own possessions. The character of Zalim Singh has been already given, and events have been narrated which shew that it is not without very serious defects: to these must be added, the weakness of superstition, and a firm belief in witchcraft. But though we

may be disgusted with his avarice, and contemn the art and worldly policy he has on many occasions displayed, it will be difficult to find an example of a prince similarly situated, who has preserved and increased his territories, while he promoted the peace and happiness of his subjects, at so few sacrifices of reputation. If his mind has had recourse to art, it was to escape from evils which he could by no other means avert: if he has been eager for gain, it was less with a desire of hoarding, than to possess himself of powerful means of defence against the dangers with which he was surrounded. His wealth enabled him to meet demands he could not evade, to purchase assistance when urgently required, and to maintain a force that made him always in some degree feared and respected. His avowed object was to avoid war; though he was above seeking exemption from that evil by a sacrifice of his pledged faith. When Jeswunt Row Holkar was in distress after his defeat by Sindia at Indore, his agent and a banker, who had gone to Kotah to realize the tribute due by that state, were peremptorily demanded to be delivered up by Baloram Inglia, one of Dowlet Row Sindia's generals, who was at the head of a large force in the vicinity of the city. The demand was firmly resisted; nor did the preparations for an assault on the town alarm Zalim Singh into any compromise of his character; and the affair terminated

in the advancement of his fame, and the increased reliance of all ranks upon his protection.

It has been already mentioned that Zalim Singh rented a number of districts from other states, which were a source both of profit and influence. His manner of managing his territories is singular, and partakes of the energy that belongs to his whole character. He seldom rents any large districts to one person, but places them under the administration of well-qualified officers, who have regular pay, and who, dividing the whole into small portions, either rent, give in management, or settle with the villagers, or Ryots, as suits the usages of the inhabitants, or convenience of the period.

The peasantry are treated by Zalim Singh with justice, not tempered, however, by kindness or indulgence. Throughout his country a strictness, if not a spirit of severity, mixes with his management; and he has endeavoured with success to establish a very complete command over his Ryots, by possessing himself of a number of moveable ploughs and labourers, who on any symptoms of local insubordination, or refusal to accede to his terms, are sent in detachments to cultivate the fields of the disaffected. In any other times than those of the last thirty years, this rigid system would not have succeeded; but the territories of Kotah have always afforded a security to life and property, which has made crowds of fugitives re-

sort to them, and not only enabled him to bring large tracts into cultivation, but to build some new towns, and improve others in an extraordinary degree: above all, Jalra Patun*, has been the favourite object of his care. This child of his creation, for such it may be termed, whether we refer to the regularity of the plan, the spaciousness of the principal streets, the excellent construction of some of the houses, the beauty of the buildings, or the wealth of the inhabitants, already vies with the proudest cities of India, and will long remain a monument of the taste as well as liberal munificence of Zalim Singh.

It is not necessary, after the details given of the princes of Ragooghur and Kotah, to enter minutely into the history of any other chiefs of the same class; a very cursory mention will suffice.

The Rajpoot prince of Doongurpoor† claims to be a senior branch of the reigning family of Odeypoor; and this right is tacitly admitted by the highest seat being always left vacant when the prince of the latter country dines. No race of men are more particular in giving and demanding those distinctions which relate to birth, than

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* Jalra Patun is upon the Chandrabhaga river.

† Doongurpoor is the principal town in the small province of Bagur, that hilly tract which lies between Guzerat and the country of Odeypoor.

the Rajpoots; nor are the rights of the individual at all affected either by his being in a reduced condition, or the adopted child of the family whose inheritance he claims. The allegiance of persons who have no title to it from blood, leads to a conclusion, that this, like every part of the Hindu system, was constructed with the view of giving permanence to that separation of classes by which it is distinguished. Dynasties could have been perpetuated by no means except by a latitude in the law of adoption, which renders it almost impossible a family should ever be extinct from want of a representative.

The princes of Doongurpoor have among their military adherents, a few Thakoors, or lords, and some Rajpoots of their own tribe; but the majority of their subjects are Bheels; and there can be no doubt they conquered the greater portion of their principality from that race. The ancestors of the present family became, at an early period, dependent on the Emperors of Delhi, and remained so until the Mahrattas invaded Central India, when they were compelled to pay tribute to the chiefs of that nation. When Malwa and the neighbouring provinces fell into their late state of anarchy, the prince of Doongurpoor, with a view of saving his country from being plundered, entertained bands of Arabs and Sindies, who soon, however, despising his authority, laid waste the country they were hired to protect. From these

insolent and insubordinate soldiers, the principality of Doongurpoor was relieved by the British government, under whose protection it is fast recovering from the misery and desolation to which it had been reduced.

The history of Banswarra, which is also in the province of Bagur, is nearly the same as that of Doongurpoor. Its princes are descended from a younger brother of that family, and their adherents and subjects are composed of the same classes. Like Doongurpoor, it has also been rescued from a condition of extreme misery, and has become a dependency of the English government, to which both states pay a small tribute.

The Raja of Pertaubghur is descended from a junior branch of the family of Odeypoor. His principality occupies nearly the whole of the small province, or rather district, of Kantul. The ancestors of the reigning prince were officers of the Delhi emperors; and one of them, Salim Singh, was a favourite with Mahomed Shah, who granted him permission to coin money in his own name: the revenue of the countries immediately West of the river Chumbul is paid in rupees of this currency*. The present Raja, Sawut Singh, who is the son of Salim Singh, was tributary to Holkar, but is now a dependent on the British government.

* Called Salim Shye.

The Rajas of Jabooah and Rutlam have been already noticed. The descendant of Kishen Doss still rules over the former principality, and is tributary to the Holkar state: his country is chiefly inhabited by Bheels, but they are of the cultivating class, and the town and territories of Jabooah, though they have suffered much, are rapidly improving.

Purbut Singh, of Rutlam, (who is a tributary to Dowlet Row Sindia) is a weak incompetent prince; but, from being at the head of a large and powerful family, has great influence, and can upon emergency call a numerous band of his kindred and clansmen into the field. This he evinced, when threatened, a few years ago, with an attack by Bappoo Sindia, to whom his tribute had been assigned. The Mahratta chief no sooner marched towards Rutlam accompanied by a small army, and with the avowed intention of using force to realize his claims, than a summons was sent by Purbut Singh to all his relations and adherents, who, though most of them were subjects of other states, deeming the duty of rallying round their chief paramount to every call, hastened to his relief. In three or four days a body of twelve hundred Rajpoots (almost all mounted) were collected, and hostilities would have ensued but for the interference of the British government, which guaranteed an engagement for the future regular payment of the tribute due by this Raja to Sindia, on condition

that the peace of the country should not be again disturbed, or its prosperity checked, by the visitation of Mahratta troops. The benefits of this guarantee were afterwards extended to a number of petty chiefs, similarly situated in condition and relation to their Lords Paramount with the Raja of Rutlam. It is to be remarked, that chiefs of the class here mentioned, have never drawn any subsistence from plunder, and stand quite distinct from those leaders who are described under the general term of Grassiahs *, a name not limited to the Malwa province, but known in several others, particularly Guzerat, where it denotes, as in Central India, chiefs who, driven from their possessions by invaders, have established and maintained a claim to a share of the revenue, upon the ground of their power to disturb or prevent its collection.

The character of the Tankah, or forced tribute of the Grassiah chiefs, merits a few words. The greater part of Central India, since the invasion and conquest of the first Bajerow (and probably long before), has been held on loose and intermixed tenures. The establishment of the usual predatory claims † of the Mahrattas preceded their usurpation of the sovereignty of this country; and

* The word Grassiah is derived from Grass, a Sanscrit word, which signifies a mouthful; and has been metaphorically applied to designate the small share of the produce of a country which these plunderers claim.

† Chouth, Dashmookh, &c.

to secure the success of the latter measure, the conquerors were obliged to compromise, and, in fact, share the revenues with many of the native chiefs of the military class, who, taking refuge in the woods and mountains, gratified their resentment by destroying possessions they could no longer enjoy. These excesses produced a compact either between the government and the excluded chiefs, or between the latter and the heads of districts and villages; a settled sum was agreed to be paid, as a Tankah, or contribution, on the condition of the inhabitants being exempt from plunder, and, indeed, an implied one of protection. This usage has existed ever since the Mahratta government was introduced, with constant variation as to particular parts of the country, but with little as to the general principles on which it was levied. The payment of forced tribute, which originated in necessity, was only continued from the same cause. It followed, therefore, that the chief who succeeded to the power of distressing and plundering the country, was usually recognized as possessing the claim to this contribution.

Large towns seldom paid forced contribution to the Grassiahs; which was principally collected from villages. Of these, and the amount paid by each when the Tankah was fixed, a list was kept by the officers of government, and it was admitted as a charge in the revenue accounts. This exaction,

on its first establishment, was comparatively moderate, seldom exceeding twenty rupees annually, and sometimes as low as two rupees upon a village; but, as the country became desolate, the burden was not diminished, the freebooters compelling the inhabitants who remained to pay for those in their vicinity who had deserted.

On any delay or refusal of the tribute, the Grassiah chief drove away the cattle, or seized some of the inhabitants, often women and children, who were rigidly confined till payment was made. Murders, or even the infliction of wounds, were rare; but when the troops of the state interfered, a regular petty warfare ensued, in which if the Grassiah chief was compelled to fly, he soon returned and repeated his excesses till his demands were complied with.

The Grassiah chiefs are all Rajpoots. They are very numerous in Central India; and from being of the same tribe, from intermarriages, and from motives of common interest, they were so leagued together, that it would have been difficult, had it been desirable, to destroy them; but the object was to connect their interest with that peace and good order which they had so long violated. This has been effected. Instead of money payments, a commutation has in many cases been given in land, that these plunderers might become industrious; and where this arrangement has not been made, the amount fixed in lieu of their

claims is paid by the Government officers, and they are no longer permitted to employ their adherents in collecting it—a practice which, while it was oppressive to the inhabitants, afforded them the means of disturbing the tranquillity of the country.

Several of the Grassiah chiefs had settled in Sondwarra; but this large district, which stretches from Gungraur to Oojein North and South, and from Aggur to the Chumbul East and West, received its name from a class of more ancient and more desperate plunderers, called Sondies. They are often called Rajpoots, but are a mixture of all classes, or rather descendants of a mixed race. In their origin they were probably outcasts; and their fabulous history (for they consider themselves as a distinct people) traces them from a prince, who, in consequence of being born with the face of a tiger, was expelled to the forests, where he seized upon women of all tribes, and became the progenitor of the Sondies, or, as the term implies, "mixed race," some of whose leaders soon after settled in Malwa, where they have ever since maintained themselves as petty Zemindars, or landholders, as well as plunderers.

That the Sondies have a claim to antiquity, there can be no doubt: but we have no record of their ever having been more than petty robbers, till the accident of their lands being divided among four or five local authorities, always at variance and often at war with each other, combined with

the anarchy of Central India during the last thirty years, raised them into importance as successful freebooters. Though often opposed to the Grassiahs who are settled in the same tract, a congeniality of pursuit has led to their being much associated with the latter, and particularly since the insanity of Jeswunt Row Holkar. From that date neither life nor property was secure within the range of the lawless bands of Sondwarra, most of whom, from breeding their own horses, were well mounted. At the peace of Mundissor, the Sondies were estimated in number at twelve hundred and forty-nine horse, and nine thousand two hundred and fifty foot, all subsisting by plunder; for the possessions they claimed as their own were in a state of complete desolation. The reduction of this formidable body of robbers appeared essential to the re-establishment of tranquillity; and two strong British detachments (one of which had a battering-train), a few of Holkar's horse, and a very efficient and well-equipped body of Kotah troops under a distinguished leader*, proceeded on this service. The Grassiah and Sondie chiefs were required to give up their forts, and to surrender their horses to be sold for the benefit of their owners; and to induce

* Mehrab Khan. This able soldier is recently dead, but not before he had established complete security in that part of Sondwarra which belongs to the principality of Kotah.

them to accept these conditions, every attention was promised to their rights as landholders, and lands were offered at their native villages, to such as had none, on very indulgent terms. *The impression of the power of the English government, the complete union and cordial co-operation of all the Native states who had possessions in Sondwarra, combined with the active and spirited conduct of the troops employed, particularly those of the Raj Rana Zalim Singh, soon made the Sondies lose all hopes of successful resistance. Some of their forts were taken by storm, others were abandoned, several of the strongest were razed to the ground, and the dispirited plunderers, assailed at every quarter, and with all their wonted places of refuge barred against them, had no alternative but to deliver up their horses, and to make, while they could, favourable settlements as cultivators. These they not only obtained, but such of their claims for forced contribution, as had been long recognized and established, were admitted.

The Sondies, since they consented to live as peaceable inhabitants, have been treated with kindness and indulgence; but, from a consideration

* In the arrangements I made for reducing these freebooters to order, or rather intimidating them into submission, I took care the force should be so much above the service as to preclude every hope of successful opposition. This in all such warfare is a most important point, and one to which our singular condition in India requires the greatest attention.

of their character, it has been thought prudent to keep for some time a force in their country, to prevent the revival of those habits which have so long rendered them the bane and terror of Central India. Complete success has hitherto attended these efforts; and Soudwarra is fast rising into that state of prosperity to which it is entitled from the fertility of its soil.

Another large division of the province of Malwa, which lies almost directly East of Soudwarra, received its name, like that district, from a race of plunderers, who, emigrating some centuries ago from Odeypoor, rose, during the decline of the Moghul empire, into consequence, and who under the direction of two brothers, Mohun Singh and Purseram, possessed themselves of fifteen hundred small towns and villages. The name of this Rajpoot tribe is Onut; and the country they seized has been called after them, Onutwarra. It was, with the reservation of five districts to mark the superiority of the elder brother, divided equally between Mohun Singh and Purseram, the former taking the title of Rawul, or chief, and the latter of Dewan, or minister;—but they exercised distinct authority over their respective sections; for Onutwarra was not divided by distinct limits of territory, but by the system of intermixed rule* over the same village, so common

* The countries over which this divided rule is established are called Dramilee, or two governments.

among the Mahrattas, which was established by the two Rajpoot chiefs throughout their possessions. The successors of the Rawul, who fixed their residence at Rajghur, became tributary to Sindia; while those of the Dewan, now established at Nursinghur *, ranked themselves among the dependents of the Holkar family. The establishment of power in the hands of two powerful chiefs made Omutwarra become a complete contrast to Soudwarra. It was, before the time of Jeswunt Row Holkar, a well-governed fertile tract, and yielded a considerable revenue; but within the last twenty years it has suffered much, being, from its situation, more exposed than almost any other part of Malwa to the depredations of the plunderers by whom that province has been so long overrun. It is, however, now rapidly recovering, and will, no doubt, early attain its former prosperity.

The rugged tract which lies between the Nerbudda and the Vindhya range has often been mentioned. The banks of that river, from Hindia to opposite Baglee, have been seized by some Gond chiefs, the principal of whom are Kooshal Singh †, of Erwass, and Anoop Singh, of Singhur. These and their adherents, after some warfare, have all

* Putten, near Rajghur, was the capital fixed upon by Purseram; but Dewan Atchee Singh, the ablest of his successors, built the fort of Nursinghur.

† This chief is lately dead.

been settled, through the liberality, or by the mediation, of the British government. In the same description of country which stretches from below Baglee to Onkar Mundatta, the banks of the Nerbudda were infested by bands of robbers, of whom the principal was the Bheelalah family of Sillanah, whose chiefs, particularly Ruttun Singh and Mundroop Singh, of Buckutghur, had extended their ravages as far North as Oojein and Indore, and as far South as the vicinity of Asseerghur and Boorhanpoor. They have, like others, submitted to the British government, which has adjusted their claims to Tankah, or contribution, from the governments of Sindia and Holkar.

The chiefs on the Nerbudda are generally called Mowassee, which refers to the place they have chosen for their residence, Mowass signifying, in the colloquial dialect of the country, a strong hold or fastness.

The description of the governments, principalities, and tribes of Central India would be incomplete without an account of the Bheels who inhabit the wild and mountainous tracts which separate Malwa from Nemaur and Guzerat. This extraordinary class of people merit more than a cursory notice. They are as singular in their origin as their habits; but, while every thing connected with them excites curiosity, their dispersion over rugged mountains, their extreme ignorance and prejudices, and their repugnance to confidential intercourse

with all except their own tribe, present serious obstacles to our obtaining a full and correct knowledge of their history.

It will be sufficient for the present purpose, to offer some conjectures regarding the origin and progress of the tribe; to notice the classes into which they are divided; and, in conclusion, to give as much of the local history of one or two of their most remarkable chiefs, as will elucidate their past and present condition in that quarter of Hindustan.

The Bheels are quite a distinct race from any other Indian tribe, yet few among the latter have higher pretensions to antiquity. The adoption of their usages and modes of life by other classes of the community, and the fruit of the intercourse of their females with both Mahomedans and Hindus, have led to the term Bheel being applied as a general name to all the plunderers who dwell in the mountains and woody banks of rivers in the Western parts of India; not only Bheelalahs and Coolies, who have an affinity to them, but many others *, have been comprehended in this class. But these are in no manner (beyond the common occupation of plunder) connected with the real Bheels, who have from the most remote ages been recognized as a distinct race, insulated in

* The plundering tribes of Meenahs, Meghees, Ramoosees, and Gonds, are often classed with Bheels.

their abodes, and separated by their habits, usages, and forms of worship, from the other tribes of India.

The account given by their modern genealogists and minstrels, differs from what we learn of this race in ancient Hindu works*; but the popular tradition, though fabulous as to their origin, may perhaps, as far as relates to their more recent history, be considered the most authentic. According to it, Mahadeo, when sick and unhappy, was one day reclining in a shady forest, when a beautiful woman appeared, the first sight of whom effected a complete cure of all his complaints. An intercourse between the god and the strange female was established, the result of which was many children, one of whom, who was from infancy alike distinguished by his ugliness and vice, slew the favourite bull of Mahadeo, for which crime he was expelled to the woods and mountains, and his descendants have ever since been stigmatized with the names of Bheel† and Nishada,

* In a Sanscrit vocabulary, at least seven hundred years old, the term Bheel occurs to denote a particular race of barbarians subsisting chiefly on plunder, and found more particularly in the mountainous woody tract of the Nerbudda. But we have still earlier mention of them in the celebrated Hindu poem of the Mahabharat, which is certainly a work of a remote era. The Bheels are not only minutely described, but a long fabulous account given of their origin.

† The common appellation of this race is Bheel, but they are also termed Nishada. Major Henley mentions the com-

both of which are Sanscrit terms that denote outcasts.

The same tradition lays the scene of their first residence and exploits in the country of Marwar, or Joudpoor, from whence, driven South by other tribes, they settled among the mountains that form the Western boundary of Malwa and Candeish, in the lofty ranges of the Vindhya and Satpoorah, and the woody and rugged banks of the Mhye, the Nerbudda, and the Taptee, where, protected by the strong nature of the country from the oppression which had driven them into exile, they have since dwelt, subsisting partly on their industry, but more on the plunder of the rich landholders in their vicinity.

The truth of this account of their emigration from Joudpoor* and Odeypoor, is supported by the local history of the Rajpoot princes of that quarter, which states that the lands were conquered from the Bheels, and by the fact that almost all the revered Bhats, or minstrels, of the tribe, still reside in Rajpootana, whence they make annual, biennial, and some only triennial visits to the Southern tribes, to register remark-

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mon application of this term to one of the tribes on the Nerbudda.

* The countries of Joudpoor or Odeypoor are usually termed, in Indian history, Marwar and Mewar. I use, to prevent mistakes by the English reader, the more recent names of these countries, taken from their present capitals.

able events in families, particularly those connected with their marriages, and to sing to the delighted Bheels the tale of their origin, and the fame of their forefathers. For the performance of these rites and duties there are fixed dues; but the Bhat, when a man of sanctity and reputation, receives from the Turvees, or chiefs, he visits, presents that have no limit, except the ability of the donor.

The Bheels of Malwa and neighbouring provinces have no record of ever having possessed the plains of that country: but they assert, and on authentic grounds, that they long maintained exclusive possession of the hilly tracts under their leaders, many of whom were as distinguished by their character as by their wealth and power. The accounts we have of the comparatively recent conquest of Doongurpoor, Banswarra, Jabooah, Burwanee, and other principalities, fully establish the truth of this pretension.

The Bheels have, by the various changes in their condition, been divided into distinct classes, which may be denominated the village, the cultivating, and the wild or mountain Bheel. The first describes a few, who from ancient residence or chance have become inhabitants of villages on the plain (though usually near the hills), of which they are the watchmen, and are incorporated as a portion of the community: the cultivating Bheels are those who have continued in their peaceable

occupations after their leaders were destroyed or driven by invaders to become desperate free-booters; and the wild, or mountain Bheel, comprises all that part of the tribe, who, preferring savage freedom and indolence to submission and industry, have continued to subsist by plunder.

The peculiar usages of these classes will be noticed in another part*. Here no more of their respective history can be given, than that each has alternately decreased, or increased, in its numbers and character, according to the fluctuations in the neighbouring governments. When these have been strong and in prosperity, the village and cultivating Bheels have drawn recruits from their wilder brethren; while weakness, confusion, and oppression have had the usual effect of driving the industrious of this tribe to desperate courses; but amid all changes there is always a disposition in every branch of this community to re-unite, which is derived from their preserving the same usages and the same forms of religion.

There can be little doubt, from what has been stated, that the Bheels of this quarter, originally driven South by the Rajpoots who were expelled by the Mahomedans from Hindustan, have within two or three centuries lost many of the petty principalities they had established in the hills; but

* This subject belongs to a future chapter, which will treat of the character and usages of the inhabitants of Central India.

another great change in this community has been the consequence of these revolutions. The relations of the petty Rajpoot princes have increased beyond the power of the heads of their family to provide for them. Bred to no occupation but that of arms, many of them have adopted desperate courses, and associated in their predatory life with Bheels; they have intermarried with that class, and hence have originated a number of tribes, among which the Bheelalah is the principal. This part of the subject will be noticed hereafter. It will in this place be sufficient to make a short mention of some of the principal Bheel leaders in Malwa and Nemaur, and the present condition of that class.

The fastnesses between Baglee and Mundleysir are chiefly inhabited by Gonds; but the plundering class who lately occupied them had amongst their followers men of desperate fortunes from Hindustan and other quarters* of India. Along the Vindhya range from Jaum to the Westward of Mandoo, which is wholly inhabited by Bheels, a considerable part of these have for more than a century owned allegiance to the family of Nadir Singh, a Bheelalah chief. He is the fourth

* Some Native soldiers who had deserted from the Madras army ten years ago, were found in the service of these freebooters. They gave themselves up, and were forgiven, but expelled the country.

in descent from a person who obtained power from the favour of a royal governor of Mandoo, to whom his spirit and enterprise had been useful in punishing a tribe of plunderers called Moumkur. The history of Nadir's ancestors presents the same vicissitudes as that of other predatory chiefs; his own life, from occurring during the late troubles of Central India, has been the most remarkable. He had fixed his residence at Jaumniah, a small village of his father's, near Mandoo, but he attained little celebrity till the death of his uncle, Jessoo Potail; upon that event (which took place sixteen years ago) Nadir came forward as the chief plunderer of the Vindhya range. He was courted and favoured by Jeswunt Row Holkar, and it was not till after his death that Nadir issued from the mountains, and began to plunder and lay waste the plains. His name, when the English entered Central India, was the terror of the Southern parts of that country; and when the present cantonment was established at Mhow, which is on the very verge of his mountains, he had about two hundred horse, and between six and seven hundred foot. The history of this freebooter henceforward is short: he was compelled to conform to the change that had occurred, and while he was deterred, through a dread of the power of the British government, from continuing to plunder, he was invited by its liberality to place himself under its protection. Almost all

his adherents, who were from distant countries, were discharged, and a number of his Bheels were taken into the English service. His nephew and son were placed in command of them, and the members of this formidable plunderer's family, as well as his followers, were through these means gradually familiarized to an intercourse with that community, from which they had been long separated, and of which they had been the bane.

The progress of Nadir Singh's reform was slow, for he was personally very dissipated, and of rooted bad habits; but this every day became of less consequence, as the intercourse with his dependents weakened his power. Many of his crimes subsequent to his submission were pardoned; but a deliberate murder of some unarmed travellers, committed by his orders, put him beyond farther toleration or indulgence. He was, at the time his guilt was discovered, on a visit to his Bheelalah relations, the chiefs of Sillanah, where he had gone, attended by five hundred armed adherents, to celebrate the marriage of his son, Bheem Singh, with a daughter of that family. A mandate* to his former associates was received at the very moment when the marriage was completed, directing his seizure. The order

* When I issued this mandate to Nadir Singh's relations and chief officers, I took care that some British troops should be prepared to enforce the order if disobeyed; but they were not required to act.

was obeyed; he was brought to Nalcha, where his guilt was investigated and proved before the assembled Zemindars* and Bheel chiefs of the neighbouring country. The mild sentence of banishment for life was passed upon him; and he is now a prisoner at Allahabad, while his son, a fine lad† of fourteen years of age, has succeeded to his authority. No event was ever more conducive to the tranquillity of a country than this act of justice. There is no part of Central India where life and property are safer than amid the late dreaded Bheels of Nadir Singh. Some of this race have not yet abandoned their habits; but their robberies are upon a very limited scale to what they were a few years ago, and measures are in progress that will, it is expected, soon complete the reformation of a class of men, who, believing themselves doomed to be thieves and plunderers, have been confirmed in their destiny by the oppression and cruelty of neighbouring governments, increased by an avowed contempt for them as outcasts. The feelings this system of degradation has produced must be changed; and no effort has been left untried to restore this race of men to a better sense of their condition than that which they at pre-

* For all the particulars of this remarkable transaction, vide my letter to Mr. Secretary Metcalfe, 9th May, 1820.

† Bheem Singh resided, for three years, almost entirely at my head-quarters, where his education was carefully attended to.

sent entertain. The common answer of a Bheel, when charged with theft or robbery, is, "I am not to blame, I am Mahadeo's thief." In other words, my destiny as a thief has been fixed by God. It is this superstitious impression which offers a great, but not insurmountable obstacle (as it has been too rashly termed) to their reform. From what has been effected, we may pronounce with confidence that they will be reclaimed to good order and industrious habits; but we must expect this result through means that elevate, rather than depress, this singular race of human beings.

Enough, however, has been said to illustrate the local history of the Bheels; their character and peculiar habits will be treated of in another place; but it is impossible, from the prescribed limits of this work, to give so complete a description as could be desired of a class of men, who, whether we consider their well-founded pretensions to remote antiquity, their remarkable separation from the other tribes of India, or the importance of withdrawing them from habits which render them the enemies of order, merit the minutest attention of the English government.

CHAPTER XII.

Government of the States of Central India.

THE established government in Central India during the reign of the kings of that country, and from their fall till the invasion of the Mahrattas, was of the same form as that of other parts of India under the Mahomedan sway.

The province of Malwa, which was one of the greatest Soubahs or divisions of the empire of Delhi, was under a Soubahdar, or viceroy, who had a Dewan or minister, and other officers of his petty court and army, while the country was managed by Collectors, and all the other inferior officers belonging to the Moghul system.

The government of the Mahrattas was, both in shape and substance, taken from the institutions of their own country, and from those they found established in the countries which they conquered; but to understand the form of their administration, as it exists at this moment, it will be necessary to

give an account of each part of which the whole is constructed, from the Mahratta chief and his principal officers, civil and military, down to the individuals who constitute the ancient and respected municipal establishment of the smallest village.

The governments founded by the families of Sindia, Holkar, and the Puar, have nearly the same form: they consist of a chief or ruler, to whom no fixed title has yet been given, different members of the same family having assumed various designations*. In theory, the power of the ruler is absolute; but with the most revered Hindu writers†, it is not deemed of divine

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* Madhajee Sindia styled himself Potail. His successor is called both Maharaja and Alijah, Hindu and Mahomedan titles, the first signifying Great Prince, and the latter, The High in Dignity. Malhar Row Holkar was called Soubahdar, or governor, of Malwa; his successors have contented themselves with the Hindu title of Maharaja, which, though in fact high, is through courtesy become very common.

† The duties of kings, their dues and origin, are described in the following passage of the Mahabaratha, one of the most sacred of the Hindu volumes. Bheeshma said, "Without a "ruler no country can prosper; health, virtue, &c. are of no "avail, two will invade the property of one, and many again "will attack two; thus men will eventually destroy each other, "as the various species of fish. A Raja protects the people "as a large fish the smaller. In this manner mankind were "continually oppressing each other, when they went to Brah-"ma to give them a ruler. Brahma directed Menu to be-"come their Raja. He replied, I fear a sinful action. Go-"vernment is arduous, particularly so among ever lying men.

origin. According to these authorities, a Raja, or ruler, was first created, and since continued,

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"They said unto him, Fear not, you will receive a recompense, of beasts a fiftieth part, and thus also of gold; we will give you a tenth of corn, increasing your store, a becoming duty of damsels, and on disputes and gaming. Men exalted in wealth or science shall be subordinate to you as gods are to the great Indra: thus become our Raja powerful and not to be intimidated; you will govern us in peace, as Koorun does the Yukshus. Whatever meritorious actions are performed by subjects protected by the Raja, a fourth part of the merit shall belong to you. Thus, let those who desire advancement hold the Raja superior to themselves (as he defends the people), as a disciple the religious instructor, as the gods the divine Indra. Let them, when in his presence, adore the man who is Raja. The Raja despised by others is a cause of pain to all; therefore let them give him the canopy and umbrella, clothes and ornaments, food and drink, dwellings, seats, couches, and all accommodations.

"Goodhista asked Bheeshma, What is the reason that a Raja, who in his birth, life, death, members, &c. resembles all other men, should be as it were adored and respected by powerful heroes, and all mankind, and that on his happiness or misery that of all those depends? Bheeshma replied, I will relate the institution of government. There was not either governor or government, judge or judgment; men with justice mutually protected each other: they became weary of this, and practised partiality, and their understanding was darkened by sin and passion, &c." The sage proceeds to state that this condition of affairs produced the necessity for a Raja or king being nominated as the head of a distracted community.

because men, when they fell from good ways, required a head or chief; but this relation to his people is described in his being termed their defender and protector, for which he is said to be entitled to a revenue; and the tribute to which he has a claim for the duties he performs, is stated generally in the sacred Volumes of the Hindus; but on the other hand, none of these have any passages which imply a check, or limit, beyond those of a moral or religious nature, on their Rajas; and, consistent with this theory, the heads of the Mahratta governments in Central India are, like other Hindu princes, deemed absolute.

Although the Mahratta chiefs of Central India are absolute, they practically exercise their authority under many restraints. The first founders of the Mahratta governments were military leaders; and though habituated to the exercise, and often the abuse of arbitrary power, still they were men tutored and corrected by the vicissitudes they had experienced. They professed themselves, and to a certain degree were, till lately, under the controul of the Paishwah. They preserved the plain habits of their nation, and were connected by the ties of blood and familiar intercourse with many of their principal officers, a great proportion of whom, and particularly those employed in civil duties, were, from their being of the sacred order of Brahmins, considered as exempted from the punishment of death.

The principal Mahratta rulers in Malwa belong to the Sudra tribe, and this circumstance, as it associated them with the lower orders, has perhaps had a salutary effect in mitigating the exercise of despotic power. Though often marked by cupidity and rapacity, there are rare instances of their being cruel, and they have uniformly shewn attention to the established forms and institutions of the countries they have conquered; but the restraints imposed by such habits and considerations, though great, are not of that obligatory nature to alter the character of their power; the chief or ruler, as before stated, being in fact, in his person, the government. The principal officers employed by the Mahratta chiefs in Central India take both their name and duties from those established at Poona. Government Officers.

The Dewan, who may be termed the prime minister, has the superintendence and chief controul over every department in the state. Dewan.

The head civil officer is the Furnavese *, (a term almost synonymous with that of minister of finance) who receives the accounts of the renters and collectors of revenue. It is not only his duty Furnavese.

* The name of Furnavese used by the Mahrattas is a compound of the Persian term, Ferd Nuvees, or the writer of sheets, i. e. by implication, official documents. The names of all their other principal officers are Persian compounds, expressive of the duties each has to perform.

to exhibit schedules of the actual revenue, and to form estimates of probable receipt and expenditure, but also to inspect all accounts of public disbursements of every description, which he regulates, and upon which he is a check. It is his duty to prepare in his office all Sunnuds or grants of Jaghires, Enam lands, &c. and commissions to officers appointed to any public situation.

Mozumdar. The Mozumdar is next to the Furnavese; his department may be termed a register-office, in which all Sunnuds, grants, or commissions *, are regularly entered.

Chitnavese. The Chitnavese is a secretary of state, in whose office is carried on all political correspondence, as directed by the prince, either public or confidential.

Siccanavese. The Siccanavese is keeper of the seal of the prince, which he affixes to all letters, orders, and grants, keeping in his office an exact register of all such documents.

Potanavese. The Potanavese is the treasurer; in his office are kept all accounts of sums received into the state treasury, as well as of all disbursements.

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* These commissions, after being made out in the office of the Furnavese, are sent to the Dewan, in whose presence the date and seal are affixed. They are then returned to the Furnavese, who writes upon them the word "Roojoo," or "Shew," and are finally brought to the Mozumdar, who writes upon them in Mahratta "Ujnia Purwana," or "By order."

The Dufturdar is the keeper of state papers, relative to the receipts and disbursements of the revenue. He is also an intendant of finance, and though some of his duties are distinct, he may perhaps be deemed a deputy of the Furnavese, to whose department he belongs. Dufturdar.

All revenue accounts, as well as disbursements of every description, are forwarded direct to the Dewan, who sends them to the Furnavese, by whom they are given over to the Dufturdar, who, after examining them, submits them to the inspection of the Furnavese, to whom it is his duty to point out what appears correct and admissible, or otherwise.

The Dufturdar has in his office a great number of Muttasuddies, or clerks, the principal of whom are employed in an office* where abstract statements are formed of the whole public accounts of the Government, and in which all matters regarding its finances are brought into as clear and general a point of view as possible.

The keeper of this office is next in rank to the Dufturdar. In it the statements termed Tuzjuma†, from the Persian word signifying explanation or rather translation, are made; also the abstracts termed Khutounee, or exact and arranged accounts of expenditure during the year.

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* This office is termed the Ik Burjee Duftur.

† Hence the well-known word Dragoman.

The above chief civil* officers of the state have under them a number of assistants and writers, termed Karkoons, Muttasuddies, agents and clerks, to aid them in the duties of their departments.

Bukshee and his Deputies.

In the Mahratta armies, the prince is deemed the Sirdar or commander; next to him is the Bukshee or paymaster, who is vested with the principal charge and responsibility, and is considered accountable for all military expenses and disbursements. This trust confers influence on him, if not authority†, above those military chiefs who are occasionally put in command of forces, and upon whom his department is always a check. It must here, however, be noticed, that this officer is only responsible for payments and the interior economy of the troops that receive their pay direct from the treasury of the state. He has no concern with those who are in the service of chiefs or com-

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* The rank and precedence of these civil officers exist only in the theory of the Mahratta governments. The talents of individuals and the favour of princes often exalt a person at the head of the lowest of these offices to the highest consideration. For instance, among these civil officers at Sindia's court, the Siccanavese has most influence, and the minister is not at the head of any office, nor even styled Dewan, but is called Mookhtarkar, or the head of the administration.

† The Bukshee possesses sometimes also the complete military command as well as the civil arrangements of the army with respect to finance.

manders, who have Jaghires, or lands, and maintain their own contingents.

The officers under the Bukshee, as well as almost all the officers who hold situations in the civil administration, are Mahratta Brahmin Pundits, or writers. These sometimes rise from their individual merit, but more generally from hereditary claims, the most prejudiced attention to which pervades the whole system of Mahratta government.

The usual military grades* in the cavalry and infantry of the Mahratta chiefs in Central India are the same as in other Indian armies; but the persons of most influence in these bodies are a host of Karkoons, or agents of the Bukshee, to whom their pay and accounts are exclusively intrusted; one of these is attached to every detachment and corps, and from their duties they become the superiors of the military officers, whose actions they not only usually controul, but direct.

There are many other officers† in the Mahratta

* These are, Sirdar, Tokdar, and Bissaldar in the cavalry, and Subadar, Jemadar, Havildar, and Naick in the infantry; latterly the imitation of English discipline introduced English names to different ranks, and it was not unusual to hear of a Colonel Durjun Singh, Captain Mehrab Khan, and Adjutant Shaik Ahmed.

† This class of officers includes the heads of the following departments:—

The Jamdar Khanah, or wardrobe department;

governments in whom great trust and responsibility are vested; who, however, are considered more as belonging to the household of the prince, than to the state, and who have little concern (except what his personal favour may give them) with the general administration of its affairs.

Huzooriahs.

The employment of that singular description of officers called Huzooriah, or servants of the presence, by the Mahratta princes of Central India, has been borrowed from the usages of the Poona court. Huzooriahs* are personal attendants of the chief, generally of his own tribe, and are usually of respectable parentage: a great proportion of them are hereditary followers of the family of the prince they serve, and whose confidence they are supposed to enjoy. They are the usual envoys to

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The Jewaher Khanah, or jewellery department.
The Sillah Khansh, or armoury ditto.
Furrash ditto, or camp equipage ditto.
Feel ditto, or elephant ditto.
Tops ditto, or ordnance ditto.
Shutur ditto, or camel ditto.

The Havildar and Naib Havildar of the Pagah or household troops of the ruler are officers of rank. The horses in this corps being all the property of the prince, makes it considered as quite distinct from the army of the state. The Pagnavese, or keeper of the accounts of this body of troops, is deemed a situation of trust and consequence.

The office of Khasjee Walah, or chief steward of the Prince's personal property and possessions, is one of high confidence.

* Derived from the Persian, Huzoor implying presence.

subjects on occasions of importance, and are considered as the representatives of their master. Their appearance supersedes all other authority, and disobedience to the orders* they convey is termed an act of rebellion.

Ram Shastree and Necaee Des.

There formerly existed in the Poona state an officer, who was nominally at the head of the administration of justice, and was entitled Ram Shastry. Under him were a number of local judges, called Necaee Des†. This system was never introduced by the Mahratta leaders who formed governments in Central India. The ruler and his chief officers have in those states reserved to themselves the exclusive regulation, if not the administration of justice, which has at times been as profitable as any source of revenue they enjoyed.

Civil officers. —— Komisdars.

The exercise of judicial authority over districts distant from the capital devolves much on civil officers called Komisdars, or collectors, (a name given whether they manage or rent the country to which they are nominated;) but to these are always attached deputies from the Dewan, the Furnavese, and each of the other high func-

* To enforce these orders, when the party does not attend to them, the Huzooriah at the last extremity burns his turban an act which usage has rendered tantamount to proclaiming the disobedient person traitor.

† This word is a compound of Necaee, justice, and Des, country, and signifies "a local judge."

tionaries of the state, and this deputy takes, in the district in which he is employed, the name of the head of his department.

A Komisdar*, whose authority extends over many districts, appoints from himself separate Komisdars to the head of each, sending with them persons† to perform the duties of each distinct office, who are skilled in the proper mode of keeping the accounts according to prescribed forms. In each of the different Tuppahs, or circles‡ of villages, the deputed Komisdar keeps a Karkoon, or agent§, if they are under management. If rented, the whole is left to the renter, with whom, unless in extreme cases, the government officers do not interfere.

A Jaghiredar, or proprietor, to whom lands have been granted, whether for service or in free gift, exercises civil and military jurisdiction over his own domain, and has, to aid him, officers‖ of

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* A corrupt compound of Kumarna, the Hindustani verb to collect, and Dar, a Persian adjunct.

† This class of petty revenue officers has no connexion with the persons deputed from the heads of the government.

‡ This varies from seven and eight to twenty and thirty villages, sometimes more.

§ This person is in some parts called a Tehsildar, but the duties that office implies in other states is in the Mahratta states of Malwa performed by the Komisdar in his own person, or through a Karkoon, or agent.

‖ The civil officers employed in management of countries, &c. are known under the name of Mamlutdar, or local officers,

similar names and duties with those of the prince who is his paramount lord.

When troops are sent to a distance on service, they are generally placed under a distinct Sirdar, or military commander, with a Karkoon, or agent, from the office of the Bukshee, who keeps the accounts and regulates the pay. If there is any part of the Pagah, or household troops, a person* from the Pagnavese† office attends them; and the troops of Jaghiredars, when employed, are provided with their pay, and have their accounts settled by officers whose name and duties are the same as those serving under the prince.

It has not been unusual, particularly when the country was in a state of confusion, to depute officers high in the state (generally military leaders) to govern large tracts of territory, in which either the revenue of lands, the tribute of Rajas, or the receipts of collectors, were assigned to them for their current and extra expenditure. But these leaders, who have always taken advantage of the times to usurp as much power as they could from the government which employed them, can-

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while the state-officers at the seat of government, and those they depute, are by the Mahrattas termed Daruckdar, or the executive officers of the ruler. Both these terms are adopted by the Mahrattas from their Mahomedan predecessors, most of whose forms they have preserved in their administration.

* This officer is at once a paymaster and accountant.

† Vide note page 536.

not be classed among its officers, or considered as belonging to its regular system of administration.

When part of the army of a Mahratta prince is serving with a Collector for his protection or support, he gives instructions to the commander; he also makes advances on account of the pay of the troops, but has no concern with its distribution, nor, indeed, with any interior arrangements. The Sebundy, or revenue corps, necessary for the country, are maintained entirely by the Collector, who charges for their support against the revenue of the countries under his management; with these troops the Government has no direct concern.

Zemindar and Canoongoe.

The collector is aided by one or more Zemindars of Pergunnahs. They have separate officers, at the head of whom is the Canoongoe, who is next to the Zemindar, and like him belonging to the land on which he has dues. In the office of the Canoongoe of the Pergunnah, or district, the records of every village including its inhabitants, lands, and every thing relating to its interior administration and revenue, are kept.

In the Mahratta governments of Central India, the pay of each officer, from the Dewan, or minister, to the lowest rank, is upon a calculation of his current and contingent expenses. The minister, for example, receives pay for a palankeen, for an elephant, for state servants, and is allowed a certain quantity of provisions. He has, besides,

fixed pay in money for his personal salary and support. It is usual to commute the latter allowance for a Jaghire*, or estate, which is, however, seldom, if ever, made hereditary.

The Dewan has, independent of this pay from the prince, certain claims on the collection of every district. He has a due, called Bheit†, of two rupees each harvest (or four rupees per annum) from every village‡ in the country. He has also in some places an anna, or sixteenth part of a rupee—in others, half that amount—from the pay of the Sebundies, or militia of the country.

The Bukshee is paid in the same manner as the Dewan, but has no Bheit, or due, from the villages, though he has a right to small stoppage§ from the troops, which makes his avowed income very large.

The Furnavese has an allowance for a palankeen and a horse, with a smaller establishment of servants and less pay than the Dewan, or Bukshee;

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* Tantia Jogh has two villages (one in Indore, and the other in the Deypalpoor Pergunnah) in Jaghire, as a commutation for his pay as Dewan. Their aggregate value is about twenty thousand rupees per annum.

† Bheit is, in its original meaning, a present to a superior.

‡ This means a registered village, which sometimes contains several hamlets or small villages, called Dependencies.

§ Every horseman who rides his own horse has a stoppage made of one rupee per mensem from his pay, as the due of the Bukshee.

and his due from each village is exactly one half of the minister's, or two rupees per annum. A similar amount from the same sources is collected by the Mozumdar, or register; but that officer, though he has an equal due, has less pay and establishment than the Furnavese, whose deputy he may be termed. The whole of the officers in the civil and military employment of the state are paid in this way; the amount varies, but the principle is the same. The collectors of districts, besides an establishment and a pay proportioned to their charge, have a Bheit on each village of two rupees per annum; and their petty Dewan, Furnavese, and Mozumdar, besides their pay, share in the collections under this head*.

This notice of the mode of paying Mahratta officers was necessary, as it explains much of their system of internal administration. It connects them with every village, and opens a wide door for abuses of all kinds. It need not be added, after the account which has been given of the Mahratta families who have exercised power in Central India, that neither the chiefs of that nation nor their subordinate officers, have ever limited themselves to their ordinary allowances; but still they have

* Zemindars and officers of this class have also claims to Bheit, and in many parts of Malwa the villages are assessed as high as twenty and twenty-one rupees annually for this one demand of public officers.

been uniformly particular in recognizing such as the amount to which alone they were justly entitled.

When the Mahrattas became masters of Central India, they preserved some of the forms, but set aside, or left to perish from neglect, the most useful establishments of the Moghul government. Among these fell every institution for the administration of justice; and though in a few principal towns, of which a proportion of the inhabitants were Mahomedans, a Cazi, or judge, was continued, his duties were limited to drawing up contracts of marriage, or writing and registering bonds and deeds of sale in his own tribe. It was thought that as all the civil officers employed at court, or in the management of countries, were well-educated Brahmins*, they would, aided by the municipal officer of the country, be quite competent to the judicial as well as the revenue administration. But the fact was, (as has been before stated) that, with the exception of Alia Bhye, justice became, from the first establishment of the Mahrattas, a source of profit to those who had power for the moment, from the military prince upon his throne, to the lowest Brahmin, who, as a delegated Karkoon, or agent, tyrannized over his village.

* These, with hardly one exception, were from the Deckan and Concan: numerous hordes of this tribe having followed their successful countrymen into Central India and Hindustan.

Before an account is given of the mode of administering what remains of the forms and substance of justice in the Mahratta government of Central India, it will be necessary to take a view of the construction of their power in their country, where there are many chiefs, who, though subject to the general authority of these Southern invaders, and recognizing different leaders of that nation as their superiors, are yet independent within their own limits, and exercise sovereign sway over their respective possessions and subjects.

Bhopal, which is the only Mahomedan government of any consequence in Central India, has always till very lately been more or less under Mahratta influence, though it never formally recognized the supremacy of that nation. Its nabobs have preserved the usages of the Moghuls both in the name and duties of its officers. The minister is termed the Dewan—his office the Dewan Dufter. The principal revenue and registering officers are called Mustoffee, and their offices Mustoffee Dufter. There are in this petty state a Mufti, Cazi, and other officers of justice, and the civil managers are known by the name of Amil, and the military leaders by the same appellations as were applied to the commanders of bodies of equal numbers under the Delhi government.

The tributary princes and chiefs of the Rajpoot tribes, though they acknowledge Mahratta rulers as their lords paramount, [illegible]

diction within their respective limits, and a separate form of administration, which it will be necessary to describe.

The Hindu head of a principality is an hereditary and absolute prince. He is, in general, the chief* of his clan, which, in some respects, extends his power, but in others limits and checks it. The principles of his rule over his own tribe and his other subjects, are quite distinct. His relations and kindred, who are termed Thakoors, have in general independent estates†, for which they pay a certain sum, or give military service, (sometimes both,) to their superior. They preserve, however, the exclusive management of their lands, but with limited authority, which does not extend to life; and there is a check on their mal-administration, from an acknowledged right of appeal, on the part of their subjects, to the prince or paramount lord.

The principle of this part of a Rajpoot principality differs little from the feudal system which formerly existed in Europe, and is liable to the same vicissitudes in the relations and powers of the respective parties. The theory is, that, though

* A Hindu prince in Central India is called Rawul, Rana, or Raja. His common appellation in his tribe is Bapjee, or father; and he is sometimes flattered with the name of Purthi Nath, or lord of the earth.

† The estates of Rajpoot Thakoors of this description are called Kottrees.

the Raja has general supremacy, the Thakoor owing him service and allegiance is master of his own soil and subjects, with the limitations stated; but it is a remarkable part of this construction of government, that the transfer of the revenue of these Thakoors to another sovereign does not necessarily imply a transfer of their allegiance.

The Rajpoot princes in Central India who held their lands from the Moghul government, gave service for them; but this was commuted by the Mahratta leaders for a money tribute. Service, it is true, may still be given from the ability of the Mahratta chief to exact it, or a desire of the Rajpoot to obtain favour by volunteering it; but both parties are quite agreed that it is not a right: and it happens frequently that, when a Mahratta leader attacks a Rajpoot prince, the Bhyebundee, or "band of kindred," makes those who pay tribute to the former send aid to the latter, if they owe him allegiance; nor would it be deemed a just act to punish* a person for granting such aid

* The Raja of Rutlam, when threatened in A. D. 1818 by an attack from Bappoo Sindia, was joined by numerous younger brethren of his family, which included several subjects of Sindia, Holkar, and the Poar Raja of Dhar. I remonstrated, but was told that the persons in question were neither prohibited by law nor usage from acting as their family pleased. I next specifically called upon two of these (the Rajas of Kotch-Baroda and Moultan, tributaries of Dhar) to return to their homes; their answer was, "they would obey

The Thakoors of the Rajpoot states, like ancient barons, claim a right of advising their prince; and, when his measures are in their opinion ruinous, they often assemble, and endeavour to sway him to a contrary course, or, in extremes, to oppose him. There is, indeed, an equality of birth and tribe with their princes, which, when combined with the possession of a strong-hold, gives a character of rude independence to these chiefs, which keeps them in a state of constant warfare with the prince to whom they profess allegiance.

The eldest son of a Rajpoot prince is called Kowur, and is very frequently employed as a vice-gerent* by his father.

The principal Rajpoot princes have, for the conduct of their government, a Kamdar, or minister, whose duties correspond with those of the Dewan of the Mahratta states. They have a Dufturree, or keeper of records, whose office is similar to that of the Furnavese. There is also a Moonshee, or secretary. There are many other public officers,

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every order but one that condemned them to the disgrace of deserting their elder brother when in danger."

* This is at present the case in the Raj of Pertaubghur, Baglee, and of Nursinghur. In the former two the princes employed have the entire confidence of their respective fathers; in the latter, Soobah Singh, having disqualified himself by constant intoxication for the functions of rule, has been compelled to resign them to his son, but he still preserves the name of Raja, with a liberal provision for his maintenance.

some of whom hold their situations, as in Mahratta states, from hereditary claims; but this is not, in the instances of Dewan, and other offices of high trust, ever recognized as constituting a right to employment.

The officer who has charge of the pay and disbursements of their troops is called Bukshee; but much of the revenue of such states being paid in kind, the station of Kottaree, or keeper of the public granaries, (which is a trifling one in the Mahratta government,) is, in many of the Rajpoot principalities, one of primary importance: and it is not unusual to combine the offices of minister and keeper of the granaries in the same individual.

Kottaree.

The territories of the Rajpoot princes in Central India, with the exception of Kotah, are chiefly administered by the Thakoors, among whom they are distributed. Khalsa, or Government lands, are generally kept in the hands of the minister, who commonly manages such parts as he does not rent, through the heads of the villages, and deputes petty officers to collect the revenue, as occasion requires.

In the territories of Kotah, very nearly the same system of administration and the same gradations of rank exist among the Government officers*

* The names of several of these officers are changed; for instance, Komisdars are called Billahdars in the Kotah country; but there is no essential difference in their functions.

as in the Mahratta territories; but while all the officers of the other states in Central India are paid by shares of grain and fees from the villages, the superior wisdom of Zalim Singh has in some degree banished from his prosperous country these ill-defined exactions, and a regular salary in money is given from the treasury to all persons in his employment.

The Rajpoot chiefs employ their own tribe in the army*, but seldom, if ever, in civil stations. If the authority of a prince of this tribe is vested in a Rajpoot chief, the person so elevated is termed Foujdar, or commander; but this is only a temporary office, created generally for a particular service which the prince cannot conduct in person. When a noble is raised by his favour to power, but without distinct office, he is termed a counsellor† or mediator; such person being generally deemed a channel of intercourse between the prince and his subjects.

The reason for not employing Rajpoots in the civil offices of these petty governments is, in the first place, their unfitness from want of education; and in the second, their insubordinate and am-

* In the army they hold the first commands. Rajpoot rulers, who, though of the small revenue, have high rank, like the Raja of Rutlam, have a hereditary leader of the Herawul, or van-guard, (the first rank in the army) as well as one of the Chundawul, or rear-guard.

† The Hindu name of this officer is Bhanjgurree.

litious spirit. These stations (but particularly that of Kamdar, or minister,) are generally filled by Brahmins, Bunnias (merchants), or persons of the Kaist, or writer tribe.

The lowest Sussiah, or plundering chief, in Central India, has his minister and other officers proportionate to his lands and followers: and his authority over his adherents is, in theory, as absolute as that of the highest prince: but in the exercise of it he is more restrained; for, being weaker, he is in greater danger of defection or opposition, or of those feuds which any attack upon life among the military tribes never fails to occasion.

The principal chiefs of the Bheels, who are usually termed Bhomeahs, are almost all of the Bheelalah* tribe. They exercise the most absolute powers, and their orders to commit the most atrocious crimes are obeyed by their ignorant but attached subjects, without a conception on the part of the latter that they have an option, when he, whom they term their Dhunnee, or lord, issues the mandate.

During the examination into the guilt of Nadir Singh, when taking the evidence of some female prisoners, it appeared that the father and husband of one of them, a girl about fourteen years of age, had been instruments in committing the murder

* The Bheelalah claim a descent, by their father, from the Rajpoots, their mother being of the Bheel tribe.

of which he was accused. She was asked if they put the deceased to death; "Certainly they did," was her firm reply, "but they acted by the "Dhunnee's, or lord's order." "That may be true," it was remarked, "but it does not clear them; for "it was not an affray, it was a deed perpetrated in "cold blood." "Still," said the girl, "they had the "Dhunnee's order." The person* conducting the examination shook his head, implying it would not be received in justification. The child (for she was hardly more) rose from the ground where she was sitting, and, pointing to two sentries who guarded them, and were standing at the door of the room, exclaimed, with all the animation of strong feeling, "These are your soldiers; you "are their Dhunnee; your words are their laws; "if you order them this moment to advance and "put me, my mother, and cousin, who are now "before you, to death, would they hesitate in "slaying three female Bheels? If we are innocent, "would you be guilty of our blood, or these faith-"ful men?" After this observation, she reseated herself, saying, "My father and husband are Na-"dir's soldiers."

The Bheel chiefs have a power over the lives and property of their own subjects; but this the

* I superintended the trial of Nadir Singh, aided by one of my assistants, Captain T. D'Stuart, who noted the expressions in the text in the proceedings.

construction of the community compels them to exercise with caution, and the rights of the different tribes or families, of which the force of the principal chiefs is formed, are defended by an hereditary Turwee, or head, to whom they owe obedience, and who, though he may become the subject of a principal chief, maintains an independence proportionate to the strength and attachment of his followers. There is seldom much revenue, except plunder, in one of these Bheel chiefships: but even in this matter they have a rude species of government, for which there are officers* distinct from those Turwees, or heads of

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* Nadir Singh, the principal Bheel chief of the Vindhya range, had the following officers:

A Dewan, or minister, who kept the few records of this barbarous petty state.

A collector of dues from hamlets. This officer also received all cattle and plunder that were stolen, and distributed the shares according to established usage; he also served out grain, &c. from the chief's stores to men proceeding on plundering expeditions.

A Havildar, or commander of horse, whose duty, independent of his military command, was to take charge of cattle at the time they were captured, and make them over to the Collector, who never went on such expeditions.

A head executioner. This man always attended the chief.

A keeper of prisoners.

An intelligencer and road-watcher, whose duty was to obtain information of unprotected villages and travellers. This was an office of much trust.

All the officers of this plundering chief had their pay in

families, who with a certain number of men are bound to attend him.

The form of government of every community in Central India having been generally described, it is next necessary to notice the judicial and military systems of the various rulers and chiefs who exercise authority in that country.

Administration of justice.

The municipal and village institutions of India are competent, from the power given them by the common assent of all ranks in the country, to maintain order and peace within their respective circles. These local authorities have been cherished or neglected, according to the disposition of the sovereign. But, as far as we can trace the history of Central India, their rights and privileges have never been contested, even by the tyrants and oppressors who slighted them; while, on the other hand, all just princes have founded their chief reputation and claim to popularity on attention to them.

Police.

The police now existing in Central India merits but a short notice. It is solely regulated by the Collector of the district, who intrusts it to petty officers, termed Tannahdars, who are posted in different places with small parties, and whose duty is to apprehend murderers, thieves, and other delinquents. In large and populous towns,

established shares of the scanty produce of the few fields they cultivated, and of the booty taken.

where a good police is of most consequence, it is placed under an officer called the Cutwal, who has an establishment of armed men for the apprehension of malefactors and offenders of every description. A discretionary power of fine, imprisonment, and slight punishment, is vested in this person. The character of the police in the principal towns of Central India, under the Mahratta government, may be judged, when it is stated that the office of Cutwal is publicly rented, and that the police is considered as a source of profit, not of expenditure, to the state. It would be useless to make farther observations upon a system, which must be more directed to private gain than to public good. It is proper, however, to state, that this shameless traffic in justice is of late introduction, even among Mahratta princes, and is chiefly limited to them. In the territories of Zalim Singh, the ruler of Kotah, a good and efficient police* has been established: but this extraordinary personage has for more than forty years added to his other functions that of chief magistrate of his own territories.

In each of the towns of Central India, there is

* Zalim Singh has formed a very extended system of espionage throughout his territories by the means of a large and well-educated corps of Brahmin Hurkarrahs. There is a most remarkable connexion, both in the formation and employment of his corps of spies, with that formed in Mysore, which is fully described by Colonel Wilks in his Report on that country.

a Zemindar, who is considered as the head of the landholders and cultivators; a Chowdry, or head of the Bunnia or mercantile tribes; and a Mehtur, or head of every other class of the inhabitants down to the lowest: these are hereditary offices, and, though instances frequently occur where bad conduct causes the party to be superseded, it is always by one of the same family, and the measure generally originates with the class of which they are the head, not with the Government.*

The above persons, who are paid by a share in the land, or by dues or fees from their respective tribes, exercise a jurisdiction in their different classes, and settle, by their own decision, or by the aid of a Punjayet, or court, all disputes they can adjust without reference to the officers of government. In all cases of serious disputes or crimes, impartial collectors of districts, or governors of towns, invariably call to their assistance the heads of the caste to which the complainants and defendants belong; and it may be stated that, in proportion as justice is administered through this channel, or otherwise, it is popular, or the reverse, with the people. The Zemindars, Chowdries, and

* The interference of Government is regarded with great jealousy, and is never exercised without causing much discontent; besides, the object is not answered, for it is the confidence of those under him that gives weight and influence to the head of the tribe, and that confidence will never be given to the creature of authority.

Mehtars, though they are deemed the natural protectors and advocates of their tribes, are also the supporters of order and authority, and, as such, bound to prosecute and punish offenders.

Criminal cases are referred to the Prince of the country, unless under circumstances where prompt military execution is deemed necessary. No officer under the rank of a Sir Soubah, or governor and commander of a province, (who has had specific power delegated to him,) can inflict the punishment of death.

If a murder or robbery be committed, the party or parties suspected are apprehended and examined by the manager of the town or district, who either hears the case himself, or calls in the aid of a Punjayet, or tribunal of not less than five of the principal public functionaries or inhabitants, to investigate the circumstances. The local officers of government, the Furnavese of the district, the Zemindar, and the Canoongoe, or keeper of the land records, are invariably members of this court of inquiry, for so it may be called.

An abstract of the evidence and opinion of this description of Punjayet, which often conducts its proceedings in the presence of the Collector, is transmitted to the Dewan, who, after receiving the orders of the Prince, directs either that the prisoner be released, or punished. These Punjayets are called by petty Mahratta collectors, more, perhaps, for their own safety, than from

any regard for the form or substance of justice. The tribunal is chiefly resorted to by persons who desire to avoid the complaints and accusations to which they would be exposed, if they decided on capital crimes* without having recourse to it. Powerful governors of provinces are not so guarded, and often determine without any reference. Punjayets are seldom called in criminal cases, when the offence is committed at the capital, or its vicinity; but even in such cases they are at times assembled, and when the abstract of proceedings is submitted to the Prince, he takes the opinion of a Shastry, or learned Brahmin, regarding the sentence that should be awarded, and the punishment is usually in conformity with the Hindu law.

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* A report was made to me, that a murder was imputed to a Fakeer at Nolye. I stated that, as it had occurred in Sindia's country, I could have no concern with it, and requested the Collector of the district in which it occurred to proceed in the usual course. A Punjayet was appointed, and on my expressing the wish, the following copy of the proceedings sent to Dowlet Row Sindia was transmitted to me.

"Tarjumah, or abstract of the proceedings of a Punjayet held at Nolye, as registered in the Komisdar's office at that place.

"A Fakeer, called Gool Shah, inhabitant of Nolye, gave "his daughter in marriage to Emam Khan, a young Patan of "Bhopal, having stipulated that the youth was to turn men-"dicant: this he agreed to, and both drank sherbet from the "same cup, one of the ceremonies of initiation. It appears

In offences of a spiritual nature, when the case is clear and the facts undeniable, the most learned Brahmins are called to aid, by their advice, the judgment of the Prince; but where the facts are disputed, there must, if justice is not disregarded, be a Punjayet; and though that is also chiefly

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"some garden-ground and a well were given as the bride's "portion.

"Gool Shah had three Chelahs, or disciples, Emam Shah, "Madoo Shah, and Goolzar Shah; these people being envious "that Emam Khan should be preferred to them, determined to "take his life, but failed in the first attempt by his refusing to "eat some poisoned sweetmeats. Upon this they attacked "and wounded him so severely with a sword, that he died ten "days afterwards. The Chelahs fled, and all search for them "proved ineffectual; but the Fakeer was confined six months, "when a Punjayet was assembled, consisting of the heads of "tribes, and people of respectability in Nolye, who came to "the following decision:

"That, as no proof had been obtained of Gool Shah being "concerned in the murder of Emam Khan, he should be re-"leased from confinement; but, should the Chelahs who have "absconded be hereafter laid hold of, and confess that they "acted by order of Gool Shah, then he is to pay the price of "blood." (This is the literal translation of the expression used.)

"Dated 22d Mohurrum 1228 Fasilee, 9th Cartick 1878 Sambhut.

(Signed) "Kazee Mahomed Fuzil u Deen.

Bin Mahomed Omar, on the part of the Mahomedans.

Luckmee Chund, Chowdry, on the part of the Bunnias.

Letchmun Doss, Chowdry, on the part of the Zemindars.

Oukar Mul, Chowdry of Zemindars."

composed of religious men, some Government officers, the Zemindar and Canoongoe of the town or district (whether Brahmins or not), attend the trial.

The same rules apply regarding Caste disputes: when the case is clear, the heads of the caste decide; but, when doubtful, a Punjayet is assembled with the usual officiating officers, aided by a Punj, formed of the heads and most respectable men of the class to whom the accusers and accused belong. Cases of disputed debts and property are usually settled among the parties; but, when referred to Government, Punjayets sit upon them, and a reluctant party is often compelled* to submit to arbitration, and to abide by the award, which, if he be found guilty, is sometimes imprisonment, but more frequently the seizure and sale of his property to satisfy the demands against him.

The Potails aid the police in seizing criminals, and they have a limited jurisdiction of a similar character to that exercised by the heads of castes in towns. It is their duty to punish slight offences, to settle all trifling disputes, and, where they conceive their personal decision will not be satisfactory, to call a Punjayet, which is composed of the most respectable inhabitants, who are often,

* This is done by a process called Tuckaza, a word which, in its literal sense, means "dispute," but which in law signification means as much force as can without violation of usage be adopted, to force a defendant to meet the appeal of a plaintiff.

if the case be of any consequence, aided by the Punjayets and principal men of the neighbouring villages.

The general object of these village Punjayets is to accommodate matters between the parties, as it is their interest to prevent the interference of the Government officers as much as possible. Where, however, the affair is serious, the Putwarry, or accountant of the village, notes the particulars, and sends a copy to the Collector. In cases where the interests of the state are at all concerned, it is deemed a punishable crime in the Potail to suppress them. Disputes about boundaries* are

* The most common cases of litigation among villagers are about boundaries and claims to lands. Upon these they are too violent to settle them among themselves, and they are invariably the subject of the longest and most intricate investigation by Punjayets; but as such must always include men who have some interest in the question, their decisions are seldom satisfactory. Oaths, ordeals, and every mode is resorted to, to accommodate or decide these disputes. The following account of a boundary settlement made by Captain A. MacDonald, my assistant, will explain the extraordinary manner in which these are sometimes adjusted.

"Himmut Singh and Sheo Singh, Thakoors of Gorbeylee and Burkairee, had a dispute regarding a tract of ground, part of which had been long cultivated by the latter, who during the last year farther encroached on it by ploughing up more of the land in question.

"At the instigation of the Collector of Narreinghur, Himmut Singh caused cattle to be driven into the fields of the disputed tract, with a view to injure the crops. The latter, how-

never settled by the village authorities. In all differences between individuals respecting debts and petty thefts, the decision of the Bhyc is suffi-

ever, resorted to precisely the same means for retaliation, and the crops both of Burkairee and Gorbeylee suffered slightly from the cattle grazing upon them.

"The Collector of Narrainghur, ostensibly to settle the quarrel, but most probably to aid Himmut Singh, sent some Pagah horse, who, advancing with a show of attack, received some shots from the matchlockmen of Sheo Singh, and two men were wounded for their audacity.

"A stony ridge, of easy ascent from the West, and abrupt from the East, nearly equidistant from the two villages, would seem to mark their natural boundaries. This ridge runs about three coss nearly North and South; on the West is Burkairee, on the East Gorbeylee. On the Burkairee side also is the small disputed tract separated from the other fields of the village by a narrow, stony, barren stripe of land, and from those of Gorbeylee by a broader stripe of the same nature.

"Along each of these barren spots are shewn small heaps of stones piled up, running nearly parallel with the ridge, and denoting lines of demarcation; that of the two lines chosen by each chief as the true boundary, being the one most distant from his own village, in order that the disputed lands might be brought within his own limits. It was agreed, therefore, that each party should produce five men acquainted with the local merits of the question, who should decide upon the true line by taking a solemn oath. The first five that were brought by the Gorbeylee chief, on being questioned, denied all knowledge of the subject which they were to swear to illustrate. But an equal number were soon forthcoming from Gorbeylee and neighbouring villages. The oaths were administered, and each party swore to the identity of that line

cient. There is a right of appeal; but this, when the judgment is supported by a Punjayet, is seldom made, except there is very glaring partiality or oppression.

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which was in favour of their chief. Thus failed the first attempt at adjustment.

"The parties were now asked, if they would acknowledge that to be the true line which should be traced by a respectable man wearing the hide of a newly-killed buffalo. To this proposition both willingly assented. Dullah, Potail of Burkairee, having been approved, a buffalo was killed and its head placed on a heap of stones, which Sheo Singa declared to be his Northern boundary. When the skin was stripped off, Dullah covered himself with it, and proceeded, followed by the parties, from the spot where the head of the animal was placed, in a direction nearly South, and taking a new line a few yards nearer to Burkairee, but to the East of the disputed tract, thus giving up the cultivated lands to the Burkairee chief."

It is curious to observe, that the local officers of Holkar and Ghuffoor Khan, who were present at the settlement of this dispute, were, as well as all the other parties, perfectly satisfied with the result of this last and most solemn appeal which can be made by Hindus in such cases.

Vide Captain MacDonald's letter to G. Wellesley, Esq. 25th October, 1820.

Major Henley, in his Notes, observes upon this practice, which is as common in the Eastern as the Western parts of Malwa, "That after the Potail or other respectable man, has "walked the boundary, his family and cattle are watched for "several days, and if any thing that has life, and was in "health when the ceremony was performed, dies before the "fixed period of probation (which is generally written) it is "deemed a judgment upon falsehood; the man is disgraced, "and the settlement rendered null and invalid."

Jaghiredars, who have the exclusive administration of their own lands, can decide all cases that are not capital; and even in these they have the power of putting to death the offender, if he is of a tribe of noted and avowed thieves (of which there are many in Central India); but not if he belongs to an industrious class; and above all they cannot punish capitally any Wuttundar, or hereditary village-officer.

The above observations shew that the Mahratta princes of Central India, when their possessions were in a settled state, observed in their administration of criminal and civil justice the same system as the Paishwah and other Hindu rulers; and within the last two years the Punjayets have been generally revived in the states of Holkar, of the Puars of Dhar and Dewass, and in several of the districts of Sindia. Indeed, there are some of the latter, in which these established and respected courts have never been wholly disused*.

The principal Rajas of Central India have the same forms of justice as the Mahrattas. With both, however, the punishment of the most heinous crimes in men of high rank is seldom carried farther than a confiscation of their lands. This lenity, which usually proceeds from fear, or from political

* The rich districts of Mundissor and Katchrode have, under a family of hereditary Renters, enjoyed comparative quiet; and in them, as well as Nolye and other provinces, Punjayets have always existed.

motives in punishing capital offences, has conduced much to the continuation of those feuds which pervade the whole Rajpoot country, in which murders in retaliation are very common.

The police of Zalim Singh, the regent of Kotah, has been noticed. He is himself the head criminal and civil judge of his country; but, though always stern and rigid, his decisions (where policy does not interfere) are remarkable for their wisdom and justice. He substitutes at his court (to which he brings all cases except the most trifling) a few men of high character and knowledge in the place of Punjayets. To these persons, who are in his service, he usually commits the investigation of every case of consequence, and, after receiving their report, is aided by their knowledge and experience in giving his own judgment.

A mode of having select individuals who form a permanent Punjayet, or special court, to aid the prince, prevails in several large towns of Central India. In Rutlam* this duty is deemed here-

* Particular persons, who enjoy high characters, are always as a matter of course members of Punjayet courts in many of the large towns of Malwa. The names of men who in better times performed this duty in the towns of Oojein and Indore, are still cherished; and at present there are in Rutlam some of the principal inhabitants who have in the revered character of Punj, or belonging to the Punjayet, gained much celebrity. The Punj of Rutlam may, in fact, be said to form a constituent part of its government, and they exercise a right of defending

ditary in some of the principal families, and is considered a high distinction; and those enjoying it are regarded with veneration by the people.

In the administration of criminal justice among the Rajpoots of Central India, the ruler or lord is

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its inhabitants from oppression, as well as of adjusting its disputes. This is in some degree to be referred to a considerable part of its population being formed of settlers from the neighbouring towns of Tandla and Peeplawud, who fifty years ago fled from violence and oppression to Rutlam, then ruled by the virtuous Rany Amrut Baye, from whom they obtained a kind of charter, in which their immunities were specified. The heads were as follows:

"1st. That no dispute among themselves should be carried "out of their own society to the Government officers for in-"quiry or decision.

"2d. That they should be exempt from the power of any "officer of the Government, or of any Sepoy, coming to their "houses to summon them as delinquents, or criminals.

"3d. That if their women had illicit intercourse (with "men not their husbands or protectors), they should not be "held as having committed any offence against the Govern-"ment; nor be punishable in any manner by the Government "for such crimes."

The chief persons of this colony became the Punj, or magistrates of their own people; and as disputes occurred between them and others of the inhabitants, the heads of the latter were nominated to sit in Punjayets with them to adjust these differences. This duty has become hereditary in several families, and the Punjayet court of Rutlam has, and still maintains, a just fame for its integrity and wise decisions. The principal persons are called Mookhs, or Presidents; and one of these is so respected, that his house is a sanctuary for criminals.

deemed absolute; but in some cases of murder, theft, burglary, or of persons entering a house secretly with any design against the honour of the females of the family, the master of the house may slay the party without being accountable to his chief. In common cases the murderer is seized and brought for examination before the prince, or his minister, who acts sometimes from his own judgment, but oftener with the assistance of a Punjayet, consisting of Government officers and heads of classes, as has been described under the Mahratta system of administration. Punjayets are employed in the Rajpoot states in all civil matters of importance; nor would a decision, where property was concerned, be deemed satisfactory or just, unless the chief had resorted to the aid of one of these courts composed of the most respectable of the inhabitants of the country.

The nearest relations of a murdered person, or the man who has suffered loss by theft, are at once the complainants and accusers. On every occasion the prisoner is allowed the aid, if he desires it, of a friend; in civil cases both the plaintiff and defendant may have persons to assist them, should they be unequal to advocate their own cause; but there are never any Vakeels*, or

* There is no part of our administration that is regarded with more alarm by Natives than that branch of our system of justice which establishes Vakeels, or renders them necessary. They argue, with prejudice, but not altogether without reason.

lawyers, in these Punjayets. [illegible] and Mookhs, or men learned in [illegible] for, if he requires it, by the prince, [illegible] nounces judgment; and in cases where the [illegible] jayet has to award, the members are usually cho[illegible] from men who have knowledge both of Hindu law and usage; and if those require assistance, they can always have it by calling in learned persons.

Witnesses are not sworn by Punjayets, unless doubts are entertained of their credibility; they are cross-questioned and threatened, but seldom, if ever, punished. A prisoner's confession is invariably received as the best and most positive proof that can be obtained of his guilt.

In every case a person tried by a Punjayet may appeal to the Raja, or chief, who can reverse the decision, and order another Punjayet: such instances are, however, rare; but the accused or condemned person may, even after the chief's decision, appeal to the ordeal, which generally requires that he should put his arm into boiling water or oil, or have a red-hot iron placed on his hand, a leaf of the sacred Peepul* being first bound upon it. If he is scalded by the liquid, or burnt by the iron, he is guilty, and the sentence is carried into execution. If unhurt, the miracle

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that this artful class promotes a spirit of litigation, and that their being necessary is a proof of the too great length and perplexity of our regulations.

* Ficus Religiosa.

enemy of his profession; the man
a favourite of the Divinity, and not
ed, but generally receives presents.
acquittals are not unfrequent, and culprits,
by art, or the collusion of those who have
the conduct of the ordeal, sometimes escape.

In both the territories of the Mahratta and Rajpoot rulers of Central India, the supposititious crime of witchcraft is punished with more severity than any other; but the punishment is almost always inflicted by the prince, by individuals, or by the rabble; and there is seldom any reference to a Punjayet, for even the forms of justice are in such cases neglected. This subject, however, belongs more to the superstitious usages than to the institutions of the country, and will be fully noticed hereafter.

The forms of Punjayets differ in many places, but the principles by which they are regulated are every where the same. These courts, as they now exist in Central India, may be divided into two classes; the first, (composed of government officers and heads of caste) who aid the prince, or his chief functionaries, in investigating civil and criminal cases; and the second, Punjayets of arbitration. The former are mere courts of inquiry, which have little, if any fixed character; and as they depend, both in their formation and proceedings, on the will of the prince and his delegated officers, they can hardly be deemed an established and [illegible] part of the government. Courts of [illegible]

tration may be termed public and private. When the parties are at issue on any case relating to property, and appeal to the ruling authority, a Punjayet sits, in which each is entitled to name an equal number, and the government appoints an officer as umpire, who presides. Those concerned have, however, a right to object to this person, if they deem him partial; and, as the court is one which cannot be constituted but through their own assent, the objection, if persevered in, compels the nomination of another. In private arbitration the government is not appealed to; but in all cases where the parties refer by mutual consent to a court of arbitration, they bind themselves (as has been stated) to abide by its award.

When a party complains to a prince, or the local officer, against a debtor, or a man that has injured him, a Punjayet (should his complaint be deemed just) is generally ordered, and the Government interposes to compel* the defendant to answer.

The members of the Punjayet are selected by the general suffrage of their fellow-citizens; and, whether in the lower or higher ranks, a person, who has once established a reputation for talent and integrity in these courts, is deemed a permanent member. It is a popular distinction, and becomes, therefore, a point of fame. A person is estimated in proportion as he is free from suspi-

* This is done by the Tuckaza, as before explained.

cion of being actuated by influence or corruption; and to have fame as a Punj* is an object of ambition with the poorest inhabitant of the hamlet as well as the highest and wealthiest citizen. To sit upon these courts is conceived a duty which every man is bound to perform. The members receive no pay†; their attendance is regulated with attention to general convenience; but, after consenting to sit, it is not to be evaded, and Government sometimes interferes to supersede by its authority frivolous excuses for absence.

There must be five persons, as the heads of a Punjayet; the other members are indefinite, being

* To be an established member of the Punj, or court, gives distinction; but to be the Mookh, or president of the court of Punjayet, is the highest distinction a citizen can have. Madhoo Seit, the opium-merchant, was long Mookh of the Punjayet courts of Oojein, and had great fame. Those who now preside over this court in Rutlam have been mentioned.

† Major Henley, who has had recourse to these courts at Shujahalpoor, makes in his notes the following observations upon these points:

"At first the persons summoned as members of these courts "noticed the expense they incurred by being called from their "families and homes; and a small per diem allowance for subsistence was in consequence granted for a short time. Afterwards it occurred that the persons employed had been without "an exception either Potails or Putwarries, which classes of "village-officers being liberally endowed by the state in both "Pergunnahs, it would seem Government had a right to claim "their occasional services under such circumstances as those "here stated. This was explained to them, and the allowance "rescinded. The decisions of a Punjayet thus composed have "invariably proved satisfactory.

more or less, according to the case and the convenience of the parties. The junior members come and go during the examination, and sometimes, if the trial is long, absent themselves for days or weeks; but the principal persons who have been originally nominated give an undivided attention to what is before them; and their authority among the other members is proportionate to their reputation, and in cases of arbitration, relative to land or property, they may be deemed judges, while their assessors are not unlike a jury. The Punjayet is expected to be unanimous in its award, but it is not indispensable that it should be so. A very large majority* is, however, required to make its opinion or decision respected, and the power it has, with the concurrence of the Government officer, to expel any obstinate or contumacious member, generally secures unanimity, which is very essential to the continuance of an institution of its character.

The Governments in Central India have settled fines and fees upon all cases brought before a Pun-

* Major Henley, speaking of these courts, states in reference to usage in the Eastern parts of Malwa: "The decision is, *prima facie*, required to be unanimous, but, should one member of the court persist in objecting, his protest is to be recorded. In the event of two members dissenting, the proceedings are nullified. The decree passed is subscribed by the court, the Government officers in attendance, and lastly by the parties themselves; its execution is then ordered by the appropriate authority, and the document recorded in the office as a bar to renewed litigation on the same subject."

jayet, which vary according to the nature of the case and the wealth of the parties. The fine which is levied* on the person who loses the cause, is the heaviest: while the fee† from the party who gains it, is proportionably light. This practice, and the shame of being found with a bad cause by the most respectable men of their own tribe, checks a spirit of litigation, which would not appear to have ever been very prevalent in this country.

Fees were never given as a matter of course to the members of Punjayets in Central India: such gifts would, according to the answer of many old and respectable inhabitants, (who have been referred to) have soiled their proceedings. But it is here necessary to state that the natives of this province have been for the last twenty years so exposed to an arbitrary military power, under which every form of justice was contemned, that they may be disposed to exaggerate the merits of a system, which is, in many districts, like a tale of other times. It cannot, however, be against the character of such an institution‡, that its merits are over-

* This fine is called Goonagaree, or "penalty for crime."

† This fee is termed Shukaranna, or, "an offering of gratitude."

‡ Nothing can exceed the feelings which the Natives both of high and low rank express regarding courts of Punjayets. I was appealed to in a case of some consequence from one of Dowlet Row Sindia's civil officers, to allow such a court to sit at the British cantonment of Mhow; which I declined,

rated, and that it is cherished in the memory of those for whose benefit it has been established.

Punishments beyond those awarded by Punjayets were entirely at the discretion of Government; and throughout Central India, with few exceptions, this power has been exercised for the emolument of the ruler and his officers. Murders are usually atoned for by heavy fines; and of late years not only crimes, but disputes between any two parties, have been openly regarded, at the principal Mahratta courts, as sources of revenue. When any party engaged in such contentions applies for justice, the quarrel is considered not as to its merits, but as to what it is likely to produce; and shamelessly given, or sold, to a person* who

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Indore was next proposed: I desired the parties to go there, and directed his agent with me to write to Tanna Jogh, the minister of Holkar, that I hoped the proceedings of the Punjayet would be just and impartial. The following is his answer:

"The General has sent Kurreem Borah and Adam Borah "here, that there may be a Punjayet on the management of "Puanghur and Dohud. Here every thing of the kind is, and "must be correct. Besides, in a Punjayet, partiality to father "or son is quite impossible: how can it be evinced towards "others?"

This, it may be said, is mere profession; but it shews the respect and veneration in which even those who exercise almost absolute power hold, or pretend to hold, this institution.

* A Huzooriah of Sindia's brought me a letter from the acting resident at Gualior, and one from Hindee Row Ghatkia, begging my support to the son of Bajee Row Jeswunt, formerly a Subadar of part of Malwa, in an affair in which

is nominated by the prince to examine and decide upon the contested cause. A favourite Huzooriah is sometimes deputed; and in such instances, whether the case be decided by the local manager, or a Punjayet, the fees and claims to remuneration of the "servant* of the presence" are distinctly

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his interference could not be admitted without creating dissension in a family. On being asked if this was not known at Gualior, the Huzooriah replied, "Certainly they knew it very well, but this *Tunta Punta* (dispute) has been given to Jeswunt Row's son, and beyond such jobs he has only one poor village to subsist himself and adherents." I, however, prevented any profit upon this occasion, as such could only be obtained by throwing a family, that had been reconciled with much trouble, into disorder again; and Sindia's right to interfere in their affairs rested on very slight grounds.

Vide private letter to Captain J. Stewart, 12th September, 1820.

* The following is a literal translation of an order, with the seal of D. R. Sindia, brought by one of his Huzooriahs, who was sent to aid in establishing claims of a complainant. It specifies all his fees.

(Seal of D. R. Sindia.)

"Dowlet Row Sindia to Bhojah Bugwan, inhabitant of Rutlam. (Arabic year Soorsun 1231.)

"Hurchund Seit, of Oojein, has claims against you, of "which you decline coming to a fair arrangement: so it is "represented. This order is in consequence given, that on "receiving it you may come to a fair adjustment. For this "purpose the Circar has deputed Govinda Munguttia, Huzoo-"riah, whose Mussalla (douceur) is fixed at five hundred ru-"pees, and a Kummer Kolah of a hundred rupees, besides his "daily subsistence at five rupees in money. The mainte-"nance of him, a Jawos (Hirkarah) who attends him, and his

specified, and must be defrayed. This practice was, during the disturbed times of the province, very general, but is now much limited to the government of Dowlet Row Sindia.

The Bheels, and other classes of noted thieves, being unable to ransom their lives, generally suffer for capital crimes. They are usually hung, or beheaded. Imprisonment is common; and state prisoners, who it is desired should not live, are sent to an unhealthy hill fort, where either the climate, starvation, or slow poison, terminates their existence. Hindu rulers, though often cruel, are seldom sanguinary, and public executions are rare: but torture is a common expedient, sometimes to discover the guilt, but oftener to compel men to reveal wealth. Neither rank, sex, nor caste, has guarded individuals from its infliction, as is fully shewn by many examples in the history of this country.

Capital punishment among the petty Rajpoot states is infrequent, in the ratio of the weakness and poverty of these princes: a fear (particularly when the culprit is a man of rank, or belongs to a strong family or tribe,) to incur by an act of

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"horse, is also to be given. A daily payment is also to be "made to him as a farther house expense of two rupees and a "quarter. Given in the month, &c. &c.

N. B. Mussalah is, literally, a compound of spices, or seasoning. It is here used metaphorically for *douceur*. Kummer Kolah means ungirding the loins, which the Huzooriah will not do till this fee is paid.

power, the resentment of the friends and relations of the criminal, combined with a desire of obtaining money, makes them in most cases commute the punishment (however atrocious the guilt) for a fine.

When petty Rajpoot Princes desire the death of either a guilty or innocent individual, they have recourse more usually to secret assassination than to public execution. Robberies, like murders, are seldom openly punished with death, except when the robbers are poor, and hardened offenders; restoration of property almost always obtains pardon. The character of the different classes of the inhabitants of Central India will be hereafter given; and it will be found, that the commission of crimes of a capital nature is much limited to particular tribes.

The Bheels have a rude system of justice. Their chiefs punish, more or less, according as their power renders them indifferent to the opinion of their adherents; but the first among them are too dependent on the attachment of the Turvies, or heads of families, who support them, to venture often on arbitrary acts of violence with their own people. If a murder, robbery, or theft, be committed, the chief, or family of the sufferer, demands reparation. If refused, immediate resort is had to acts of retaliation or reprisal; and, as this provokes farther violence, it often happens that several lives are lost to avenge a single murder, or fifty head of cattle plundered in consequence of

one having been stolen. These proceedings are, however, only the effusions of sudden rage; and the elders of the tribes, when that is cooled, interfere, and in all quarrels or disputes, great or trifling, they have resort to Punjayets. These often consist of several hundred members, as every person connected with the plaintiff or defendant sits upon them: they generally assemble under the shade of a tree, and settle the terms on which the murder, robbery, or theft is to be compounded. Fines in cattle or money are high upon murder, but Bheel Punjayets never inflict death. If the crime committed be of so atrocious a nature as not to be compounded or forgiven, the culprit is pursued and destroyed by those whom this act has made his enemies: but he must be put to death in what they term an affray, that is, in warm blood;—to take the life of each other coolly, is revolting to their usages.

The proceedings of Punjayets of the [illegible] are not written; but the memory of the most remarkable of the awards is long preserved by tradition of the tribes concerned, and [illegible] quoted on the authority of their elders as precedents for future decision. When one of these rude courts meets, a buffalo and a large [illegible] of liquor are made ready; and the [illegible] ceremony of breaking a stick, or throwing [illegible] into a revered stream, announces that [illegible] stanched, or the dispute settled, [illegible]

slain, and the copious draughts of liquor which are liberally taken by all parties, make them soon forget that they were ever enemies.

The military branch of the government of the Mahratta chiefs in Central India has been described. The system differs in no degree from that established in the Deckan and every other quarter. Their cavalry are divided into the usual classes. First, Pagah, or household, which means horses belonging to the chief, rode by his relations, hereditary servants, or hired men, called Bargheers. Secondly, Sillahdars, or persons who find their own horses, and serve at a certain sum as an average pay per month. There has hitherto been, as described in the historical part of this work, a third class with these Mahratta armies, who served for booty; but they are almost extinct, and can never be revived but by a return of those times of anarchy and general disorder in which they originated. All these troops are governed by a very loose discipline; the demands they have against their leaders (which are always in arrears) create recurring mutinies, which weaken the little subordination that exists. The consequence is, that, unless in extreme cases, any punishment beyond discharge from service is very unfrequent; but when inflicted, they are quite arbitrary, depending on the will of a commander, who seldom or never gives the form of a trial.

The infantry of the Mahratta governments in Malwa are of two descriptions: the first (which was for a long period the only kind in the service of the chiefs) is the common irregular matchlockmen, either of the country or foreigners: Mewatties, Patans, Mekranies, Sindies, and Arabs, who are hired on higher pay, on account of their supposed superior courage, particularly the last, who have a just reputation for their valour and skill in defending forts and walled towns. The control of these loose bodies of irregular infantry is left to their respective leaders, who manage them agreeably to the established usages of their tribe: and offenders are punished according to the custom of the class to which they belong.

Besides these troops, the Mahratta chiefs of Central India had numerous corps of regular infantry and parks of cannon, which have been before described; these, which were long under European officers, were clothed, disciplined, and governed, as far as the constant interference of the Mahratta superiors with the officers and the want of regular pay would admit, upon the same principles as an European army.

The army of the Nabob of Bhopal has been noticed: the troops maintained by the Rajpoot princes and chiefs (with the exception of Zalim Singh, who has a military establishment not dissimilar to that of the Mahratta chiefs,) were in

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common times their relations and personal retainers, who generally served on horseback for the lands they enjoyed. On emergency, these petty rulers also hired foreign mercenaries. The former were ruled by the usages of the tribe to which they belonged; the latter were under their respective leaders; but the want of ability of the princes, who entertained these bodies at a moment of necessity, to pay them, generally subverted all order, and in many instances led to these professed servants of the state becoming its real masters, and the cruel oppressors both of the chief and his subjects. In such cases, it is superfluous to add that little subordination or military discipline remained, beyond what the concurrent voice of the officers, who became a species of military aristocracy, thought essential for self-preservation. These bodies of irregular and turbulent foreign mercenaries have been all expelled from Central India; and the military branch of the government of the Rajpoot chiefs is now (with few exceptions) intrusted solely to their own tribe and immediate dependents.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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